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Nadia, the Russian Spy; OR, THE BROTHERS OF THE STARRY CROSS.

BY CAPT. FREDERICK WHITTAKER,

Author of "The Red Rajah," "Double-Death," "The Rock Rider," "The Sea Cat," etc., etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

THE COSSACK CAPTAIN.

At the edge of the Eastern Steppe commences a gentle slope, which continues for hundreds of miles in a circle, and forms a vast bowl, in the center of which lies the lonely Sea of Aral, separated from its sister Caspian only by the plateau of Ust Urt.

On the eastern rim of this bowl is a crack, and through the crack runs the Syr Daria River.

And the Syr Daria marks the Russian frontier.

Here, on the day when our story opens, might be seen a spectacle peculiar to Russia—fort, camp and church united in one, and all guarded by the faithful Cossack.

The fort stood on a little knoll near the river, commanding with its guns, miles and miles of desolate plain. Below it lay the camp of the Cossack, and in the midst of the camp rose the green dome and golden cross of the church.

No camp of frail tents is that of the Cossack, but a village of neat, warmly-thatched cottages with yellow-painted walls; well-kept gardens around each; the whole as large as many a populous town.

Where the steppe to the north is still covered with snow, the southerly slope of Syr Daria Plain is already waking up to spring; and there are dark patches among the white fields, which grow more and more frequent, till a hundred miles further bring you to the plains of Turkistan.

The bell of the little church was tolling for the end of mass, and a small patrol of Cossacks stood by their horses, when a mounted officer rode slowly out of the fort hard-by, shortly after followed by the glittering figure of General Grodinsky, the commander of Fort Perofsky.

The General was in full uniform, with all his orders on, and cut a far more splendid figure than his companion, and yet it was observable that he treated the latter with marked respect. The person in question dressed in the simple uniform of an officer of Cossacks, and yet there was a certain nameless air about him that implied one of distinction.

"I am much obliged for your offer of help, General," he said, quietly, as the other concluded a string of Russian compliments; "but I have determined to do these things for myself, without any assistance. The sergeant of the party knows the way, I presume."

"I shall have the honor of sending the best warrior of the camp with you—" began the General.

The young officer raised his hand gently.

"Nothing but captain," he said. "I am Captain Blank, of the Cossacks of the guard, on duty here, that is all, General. Does the sergeant know the way to the next post?"

"He does, captain," said the General, soberly.

"Then farewell," said Captain Blank. As he spoke he waved his hand and shook his rein. His steed sprang forward with a bound, and carried him to the gate of the camp. As he appeared there, a gruff voice within shouted:

"Mount!" Then twelve Cossacks leaped on their horses like a flash, and a sergeant with a tremendous beard rode out of the gate and saluted Captain Blank, saying:

"We gladly obey your honor!" Captain Blank looked at the grim sergeant and his wild-appearing escort with an amused smile. Then he kindly returned the salute, and asked:

"What is thy name, friend?" "Sergeant Potapoff, at your honor's service," said the other.

"Then follow me, Potapoff, and the rest of you, my children."

And the young officer started at a gallop, followed by the hard-riding Cossacks at the same speed, and turned toward the open steppe to the north.

In a very short time they had passed the

* The Russian soldier's formula, "Tsu hara lei ya."



"My lord, ride back whence you came, and leave me here!"

camp, ridden over the edge of the vast bowl on whose rim the fort was built, and were alone in the steppe, for the flag-staff of the fort was the only thing that remained visible to mark the Russian post, and that was fast disappearing under the land.

For some time Captain Blank rode silently on, the frozen snow crackling under the rough-soled shoes of his horse, keeping a steady course to the north-east. The sky that had been bright in the Aral valley, was fast growing gray, and gathering into dark clouds to the north, and a cold, damp wind came whistling past their ears.

Captain Blank slackened his pace, unstrapped his cloak and wrapped himself in it. Then he beckoned to Potapoff to come up alongside.

"What does that cloud mean, friend?" "The last snow, your honor, and 'tis ever the worst."

"Can we go through, think you, to the next post, if it comes on?"

Potapoff wrinkled up his weather-beaten face and looked ahead.

The dark cloud was coming toward them very rapidly.

"We can, your honor," he said, gravely, "but—"

"But you think I am not able to face the same hardships," said the young captain, good-humoredly. "Well, Potapoff, you shall see. How long will it last, think you?"

"Three long days," said the old sergeant, gravely; "but your honor must know 'tis no

common storm. The very wolves freeze to death, if it catches them away from their burrows."

"What would you recommend then?" said the captain.

"If your honor will let an old rider, who remembers the White Czar, speak freely, he would say, turn back till the storm is over."

Captain Blank looked at the old sergeant with a curious look.

"Whom do you mean by the White Czar?" he asked, disregarding the latter portion of the Cossack's speech.

"Whom but the blessed Alexander, whom the saints have in their holy keeping," said Potapoff; and he crossed himself devoutly.

"And the present Czar, what is he called?" asked the captain, with a smile.

As he spoke, down came the storm in a whirl of snow-flakes, and snatched and tore at the cloaks of the horsemen, while the spirited little horses snorted with disgust and strove to turn their backs to the blinding snow.

Potapoff continued his answer as if nothing had happened.

"We call him the Black Czar, because we believe the Black One has misled his mind, as he did that of the Czar Paul."

* The Emperor Paul died in Napoleon's time, leaving four sons, Alexander, Constantine, Nicholas and Michael. Alexander I. succeeded him, beloved by all as the "White Czar." At Alexander's death the Grand Duke Constantine gave up the succession to Nicholas, whose harsh and cruel reign gained him the appellation of the "Black Czar." The present Emperor, Alexander II., son

of Nicholas, inherits the amiable disposition and beloved title of his uncle. He also is known as the "White Czar." The Emperor Paul was generally thought to be a madman, and was assassinated.

The captain looked at the sergeant through the snow-flakes with a strange expression.

"You talk like a bold man, sergeant."

"I am a free Don Cossack," was the simple reply.

Some sort of sudden irritability seemed to seize Captain Blank, for he struck spurs into his horse and rode into the teeth of the storm at full speed, followed by the hardy Cossacks.

On through gathering snow-drifts he dashed, without any seeming object, facing the cutting storm as if he rejoiced in it, till the distant howling of a pack of wolves on the steppe came past his ears, borne on the wings of the north wind.

Then he beckoned Potapoff alongside once more.

"What are those wolves howling about?" he asked, as he listened to the approaching cry.

"Is there game on the steppe?"

Potapoff shook his head. They could hardly hear each other for the noise of the storm, as he shouted back:

"Not a head, your honor. It must be some travelers."

"Then come on, in God's name. He sent us here," cried Captain Blank, in answer.

And away went the Cossack patriot toward the distant wolves, led by mysterious Captain Blank.

of Nicholas, inherits the amiable disposition and beloved title of his uncle. He also is known as the "White Czar." The Emperor Paul was generally thought to be a madman, and was assassinated.

CHAPTER II.

IN THE STORM.

PRESENTLY through the storm came flying a sledge, drawn by three horses at full speed, but without any noise of bells, while a black crowd of wolves galloped alongside, and tried to spring up at the horses and into the sledge, howling and snarling.

At the moment when this strange sight came across them, there was a red flash from the sledge, and the report of a gun; then a terrible snarling and growling followed, in the midst of which was heard the shrieks of a woman, as a black crowd of wolves leaped into the sledge.

A dark figure fell out behind on the snow, and Captain Blank fired into a heap of struggling wolves six shots from his revolver, while the Cossacks, with loud hurrahs, speared at the rest of the fierce brutes, as they galloped alongside the sledge, and fled into the steppe, out of sight.

Then, in a moment as it seemed, the young captain found himself left alone in the driving storm, the wolves all scattered in dismay, sledge and Cossacks alike lost to view and rushing toward the fort before the merciless gale, while in front of him lay two dead wolves, and a woman, who might or might not be dead as the case should turn out.

The young captain was in the act of swinging himself off his horse to find out, when the woman rose up on her knees in the snow, and turned her face toward him.

And Captain Blank stared at it in wonderment, for it was the face of the queen of all beauty, and that beauty brunette.

Eyes of wonderful size and depth were fixed on his, eyes whose magnetic power might have lured angels down from heaven. The fur hood which had concealed her in the sledge had fallen back in the struggle with the wolves, and allowed a mass of black curls to escape over her shoulders; while a dark face, with the perfect outline of Italian beauty, keen, aquiline and rich in color, completed the spell which enthralled him.

This lovely creature, kneeling there alone in the snow, clasped her hands piteously and addressed him in imploring tones.

"For the love of our Lord Christ and all the saints, good my lord, ride back whence you came, and leave me here."

The officer for a moment was astounded.

"Leave you here, madam, in the midst of a terrible snow-storm! As an officer and a gentleman I could not do such

a thing."

"As an officer and a gentleman, if you wish to earn the undying gratitude of a broken-hearted woman, do not detain me," she cried, passionately. "Oh, you do not know what hangs upon my journey, sir, or you would not stop me. I can not, I will not go with you to that fort, alive."

The young officer looked gravely at her. Wildly as the storm swept past them, there was something in this frail, beautiful girl that seemed to defy all its rage, and to be totally devoid of fear, even after her late escape from instant death by such a hair's breadth.

"Gracious lady," said Captain Blank, "if I leave you here in the snow, you will infallibly be buried alive and frozen to death. Do you know that?"

Then, for the first time, she started up, and looked around as if bewildered, murmuring:

"The sledge—where is Demetri?"

"The sledge has been carried away by your frightened horses," said the officer, kindly; "and ere this, my Cossacks have found and stopped it. Your only chance of reaching it is to go with me."

"And what then?" asked the lady, eagerly; "may I pursue my way? Will you not stop me?"

"I fear it will be my duty to take you to the fort," said the captain, in a grave tone, "unless you have a regular passport."

"I have none," said the lady, frankly, but in a despairing tone; "but oh, sir, something in

your face that tells me I can hope for reason and pity from you. On my journey hang life, liberty, and happiness, for one who—

"Enough," interrupted the officer, gently raising his hand as if to deprecate further speech; "I seek not to know your secrets. As an officer of the czar, it is my duty to take you to Fort Perofsky; as a knight of the Cross, I must help a woman. Tell me only this, do you love Russia? Are you true to the czar?"

"God knoweth that I am," she said, clasping her hands. "Oh, sir, if you knew all—"

"I would know nothing but this," he said, gravely; "you are a lady and in distress. I dare not leave you to perish. Give me your hand."

He extended his own as he spoke. With singular activity the lady placed one foot on his in the stirrup, and sprang up to the horse's croup.

"We have lost time enough," said Captain Blank. "Now we must ride to save our lives."

Away went the fiery Ukraine stallion down the wind at a rapid pace, and the storm seemed to abate as he sailed before it. Captain and lady held their peace as they plunged along through the rapidly deepening snow, which already was up to the fetlocks of the steed.

They galloped on in silence, mile after mile, their only guide the wind, which blew directly toward Fort Perofsky.

After a long ride, the horse began to neigh loudly, and the call was answered some distance ahead.

"My Cossacks and the sledge," was the only commentary of Captain Blank.

He felt the figure of his companion tremble all over as he spoke, and the clasp of her arms loosened round his waist, but she said nothing.

Presently a gray, plunging ghost of a horseman powdered with snow loomed up ahead; and grim sergeant Potapoff came riding up, saluting as if nothing had happened.

"Where is the sledge?" asked the captain, as Potapoff wheeled and rode alongside in silence.

Through the howling storm the Cossack shouted back:

"Halted, a verst ahead, gracious captain. We could not kill off the wolves and stop it before."

"Call off your party, and we will go back to camp," said the captain. "The sledge will proceed alone."

He felt a close pressure of the lady's arms as he spoke, and Potapoff galloped away into the mist of snow-flakes, while the mysterious captain slackened his pace, and rode at a canter.

"Gracious lady," he said, to his fair partner, "I am taking a risk for your sake no other man in Russia would take. You are about to cross the frontier, and I know what you are, a political prisoner. Nay, fear not, I will not betray you, for your face tells me you do not lie! To you I say, do not make me repent this."

The tones of his voice were grave and solemn, and he turned and looked in his companion's face. The dark eyes met his own blue ones with perfect frankness, and they were full of tears, as she answered:

"My lord, you shall not repent it, and Russia shall not."

"I hope not," he said, gravely; "and now tell me frankly, are you not afraid to face this storm alone? Remember that our post is the only human habitation for many hundred miles."

"My lord," said the lady, proudly, "you say you know me. If you do, you know that a Russian noble never feared to be alone with God."

As she spoke, they discerned the dim outline of the sledge through the driving snow, and there on the box sat the man she had called Demetri, waiting, while the party of Cossacks were drawn up at some distance off. The captain pulled up by the sledge, and the lady jumped out and buried herself among the furs, without a word. Then she turned to the strange officer without speaking, and kissed her hand. He raised his cap in a courteous salute, Demetri cracked his whip, and away went the sledge to the south, lost in the storm in a moment.

Captain Blank rode slowly toward the fort, as if in deep thought. Ere long he beckoned to Potapoff, and asked:

"Sergeant, what lies in the way yonder sledge is going?"

"The open steppe, your honor. They will be lost to a certainty unless—"

"Unless what?"

"Unless they come across the Middle Horde of the Tartars, and then God help them, for the heathen will sell them for slaves to the Khan of Khiva."

CHAPTER III.
THE MINISTER OF POLICE.

In a large chamber in the Winter Palace at St. Petersburg stood a handsome officer of courtly presence, dressed in the dark-green uniform of a Major-General, his breast covered with crosses, while under his arm was a large portfolio.

The handsome dark face of this officer, with a closely-trimmed black mustache, had yet a stealthy and cunning look about it that was not altogether agreeable. He stood with his head bent, smiling obsequiously before a very tall, heavily-built man, in the uniform of an officer of cuirassiers, who sat by a table on which reposed his helmet and sword, an expression of pride and irritation on his haughty features.

"Your majesty commanded me to watch at all times, and I have done so," said the obsequious General. "My spies are in every regiment and garrison from Lapland to Perofsky, and—"

"Enough, enough, General," said the czar, harshly. "Your trumpet is a loud one, but you blow it too often. Can you tell me at this minute what they are saying about the declaration of war in Moscow?"

The General smiled, blandly, and opened his portfolio, from which he produced a paper, saying:

"Your majesty has only to command to be obeyed. Here is the report of Inspector Karkoff, about the language used in the tea-gardens, by shop-keepers, serfs, and all the rest. The prevailing sentiment was loyalty to the czar, and death to the Turk."

The czar took the paper, and glanced over it carefully.

"Of course," he said, sullenly; "that's the old story. I see the bright side of the picture only. General Gorloff, where is the dark side? What do the Old Believers say?"

The czar had a cold, cruel eye, and he fixed it sternly on the Minister of Police. Gorloff bowed and smiled deprecatingly, as he said:

"I did not wish to anger your majesty with the sayings of that scum. Here is the report of Inspector Boris. He pretends to be an Old Believer, and has access to all their secrets save one. That, your majesty, I will frankly own has baffled our best men."

"And what is that?" asked the czar, coldly, as he took the paper handed by the minister.

"It is the secret of the order of Knights called Brothers of the Starry Cross," said Gorloff, in a low tone. "One of my men became a

member, but three days after he was found dead, with a cross-cut over his clerk's head. He never reported."

The czar made no answer, but perused the paper he held in silence. As he read, a dark frown gathered on his brow, and when he had finished, he turned to Gorloff.

"General," he said, with a face outwardly calm, but his eyes glaring fearfully, "I am glad I saw this report. These Old Believers have been a thorn in my side all these years, but I'll root them out if it costs me my crown. So they presume to criticize my measures, and call the Holy Orthodox Church schismatic, do they? Let them look to themselves. Prince Gallitzin is their chief. Watch him closely. If one way escapes him, even if it be in the sanctity of his chamber, let me know at once, if that word be treasonable."

Gorloff rubbed his hands, and smiled.

"The Princess Gallitzin is in my pay, sire."

Nicholas smiled back at an answer.

"Gorloff, you are a treasure. I hate that man. Has he spoken?"

"Nothing but this, your majesty. Prince Dolgoroucki told him one day that he had fallen under your majesty's displeasure, and might be degraded. Gallitzin, before a large company, said: 'Tell the czar he can not degrade me, for my ancestors were grand dukes in Russia, when the Romanoffs were counts of Holstein-Gottorp.' And the company laughed, for they were all Old Believers."

The emperor's face turned purple as he listened, and he hoarsely whispered:

"He shall go to the mines for that, by the soul of Peter."

Gorloff smiled again, his usual bland, insinuating smile, as he said, in a low tone:

"It might not be politic at present, sire. Prince Gallitzin is the head of the young Russian party, to which three-fourths of the high officials belong. This war with the English is by no means popular with the army, and if the prince were once in Siberia, he might do more mischief than even here."

The czar started, and looked at the minister earnestly. There was a hidden meaning in the other's words he had not fully fathomed, but he felt vaguely apprehensive.

"What do you mean?" he asked. "Speak without fear."

Gorloff straightened up, and looked his master in the face.

"Simply this, your majesty. There are five prisoners in Siberia, now, for every soldier, and all they need is a leader. One of them morning I received intelligence that a female crossed the border by Fort Perofsky into the Independent Steppe, and that that female was—"

He leaned over and whispered a name into the emperor's ear, and that name produced a remarkable effect on the czar. The autocrat of all the Russias turned pale and trembled.

"Well, well, how did she get out? What was Grodjinsky doing to let her go?" he asked, in a low voice.

"The General was in the fort, sire; a terrible storm was raging; a Cossack patrol was out and came in, driven by the storm. One of the men babbled in his drink that their new captain had let a prisoner escape across the border; and, at the same time, I received notice that one Anna Bronk had disappeared from Tobolsk. Putting things together, I found that Anna Bronk and the escaped prisoner were the same. Your majesty knows who is Anna Bronk."

The czar listened in silence with great attention. Then he said:

"And the officer who let her escape. Is he alive? Who is he?"

"Captain Blank, your majesty."

"That is no name. Who is Captain Blank?"

General Gorloff smiled again, and opened his portfolio.

"Here, your majesty," he said, "is a list, as near as my men can find out, of avowed Brothers of the Starry Cross. Captain Blank is set down as a Grand Commander."

The emperor rose to his feet and faced General Gorloff with a lurid light in his eyes, that told men were wont to quail under.

"I asked you, Gorloff, who is this captain who dares to let prisoners cross my borders unchecked. You answer by telling me what he is—an enemy of mine. Do you mean to say that my minister of police does not know?"

Gorloff turned pale under his master's anger, and stammered:

"Gracious sire, General Grodjinsky himself did not know. This captain brought an order in your majesty's own handwriting, directing all officers on the frontier to obey him as if he were your own self. The order was couched in the same words as that given by your majesty to his imperial highness, the Czarevitch."

"To my son!" echoed the emperor, astounded.

"It was a duplicate, your majesty; how obtained, no one knows. The Grand Duke Alexander arrived at the fort three days after Captain Blank left, and Grodjinsky and he had a fine laugh about the impostor. It seems that Grodjinsky took him for the grand duke himself."

The czar has been listening impatiently. Now he interrupted.

"You are my minister of police. A prisoner has escaped, whose mission means death to Russia. A traitor allowed her to escape. I want that traitor found. I give you one year to bring to me the woman, one month for the man. If you fail, look to your head. I have spoken."

General Gorloff saw his master was in grim earnest.

"Your majesty," he said, quietly, "there is one man in your dominions who can solve this mystery to-day."

"Who is that?" asked the czar, scornfully.

At that moment a knock at the door was followed by the voice of the orderly announcing, as if answering the question:

"His imperial highness, the Czarevitch."

(To be continued.)

The Origin of the Dollar Mark.—The origin of the dollar mark is disputed. Most old writers claim that the \$ came from the old Spanish pillar dollar, which bore on its reverse the two "Pillars of Hercules" the ancient name of the opposite promontories at the Straits of Gibraltar. The parallel lines in it (thus I) stand, according to this explanation, for the two pillars, and they are bound together (thus \$) with a scroll. More modern writers claim, that as the Spanish dollar was a piece of eight reals, "S R" being once stamped on it, and it was then called a "piece of eight," that the figure 8, with a line drawn through it, as characters were generally formed, produced the sign of the dollar. It was not called a dollar, but a "piece of eight." The name itself was born in Germany, and from the fact that the first piece of this character was coined in the Valley of St. Joachim, in Bohemia, in the year 1815, it was called Joachim's thaler, the last half of this word being pronounced (and often written) dollar.

*Czarevitch or Czaravitch. The heir apparent of the Czar or Caesar. Vitch is the Russian for "son of," as Czar is a corruption of Caesar. Nicholas was now Alexander Nicholasievitch, etc.

PENSEZ A MOI.
BY WAIF.

When hands and lips shall part at last,
And hope shall smile no more,
And when of happier days you dream,
And joys forever o'er,
Should lonely grief and dark despair
Your sad companions be,
Oh, darling, when my only prayer
Is, that you'll "think of me."

But if some sunnier dawn should bid
Gloom's darksome shades depart,
And Time, some fairer face than mine
Should shine upon your heart;
Still, even though to her you bend
An earnest lover's knee,
Alas! a passing fancy, lend
To kindly "think of me."

For whoso'er life's tangled path
Shall lead my weary feet,
And though within this vale of tears
With an ill omen's aspect, shaping forth,
From the dull clouds, wild menacing forms and signs,
—HEMANS.

"In one lone soul whom no one sees—
Oh! chase away the slow disease!"
—BLOOMFIELD.

Mrs. LAYWORTH called to a passing maid, the maid to the hall porter, the porter to an attendant lackey, who ran out to the scene of confusion.

Ytol was lying prone across the path, as though stricken senseless by some invisible hand. The children, affrighted by the spectacle, were clinging to her motionless form, crying loudly, and calling her name.

But before the lackey reached them, Ytol had recovered. She arose slowly, and whispered hoarsely to the little ones; then, after standing dizzily for some moments, she walked toward the house.

Her face was blanched in its expression of terror; her eyes were staring and startled; her whole appearance that of one who restrains, by a great effort, the impulse to shriek aloud, and fall helpless under the influence of a gnawing dread.

Miss Lyn, what was it? What in the world had happened? Mrs. Layworth had descended to the hall, and confronted Ytol with the inquiry:

"Nothing much, madam—nothing," she articulated, in a faint, unnatural voice. "I—I am unwell. A sudden illness. Permit me to retire to my room."

"Certainly. Shall I have you waited upon?"

"No, no; never mind. I will be better soon," and she hastened on up the stairway.

Ione was still standing by the window, on the second floor. She gazed hard at the white face, as it went by, and muttered:

"It is strange—very strange. How much like the picture!"

When Ytol had gone, Ione sought her mother's room.

Crossing the apartment, she gently grasped a long fold of crape that hung down over a massive oil painting; and drawing this aside, she gazed upward in silence.

It was the picture of a young and beautiful woman, with blue eyes, hair that was golden and massy, and in the mouth a mold of angelic sweetness.

Ione seemed riveted in contemplation. She beheld, here, a resemblance to Ytol, so strong that it was marvelous.

While she gazed thus, Mrs. Layworth entered. Pausing, she, too, looked steadfast at the picture.

"Ione, it is wonderful."

"Strange, strange, indeed."

"But come; hide it. I do not care to look at it. I once loved that face; now, I hate it."

"The face of your sister."

"Hide it, Ione—hide it."

Ione allowed the crape to fall back again, and turned away.

"Where are you going?"

"To change my dress. I fear Lord Somers will grow weary with waiting. He has come for a long visit."

"Stay," interrupted her mother, laying a hand upon her arm. "Has he spoken to the point yet?"

"Not yet, mother."

"Do you think he will?"

"Most assuredly. I expect it to-day, by what has already been spoken."

"And when he does?"

"I shall accept him."

Ione withdrew.

Mrs. Layworth followed her with her large, lustrous eyes, and a train of varied thoughts ran riot in her mind, just then—half of her child, and the prospective match with Lord Somers, and half of the new governess, whose arrival had, in so short a time, created a double mystery in the household of Wilde Manor.

Then her eyes wandered to the veiled portrait, and she shook her head strangely.

True to his promise, Captain D'Arcy called, on the following day, to bid Ytol adieu.

He found the young girl pale and nervous.

At the first opportunity, when alone with her, he inquired the cause of her apparent disposition—apparent, because unrest, pain, ay, fear was written in her features; the stamp of a tortured mind.

They were walking together before the house, and Ytol leaned heavily on his arm.

"You look sad," he said. "Don't you like your new home?"

"Oh, yes; Mrs. Layworth is very kind."

"Then what is the trouble?"

"I am not complaining, Captain D'Arcy."

"With the lips, no; but I read it in your face."

The blue eyes turned timidly upon him, for a second, then drooped. She did not reply.

"Come, Ytol, you must tell me."

"I will, Captain D'Arcy, I have a wretched, wretched life before me."

"Oh, don't grow despondent!" he interrupted. "Cheer up. I guess it is a struggle for you; but you'll meet it bravely, I know, when—"

"No, no, I don't mean that. I do not shrink from my work."

"Tell me what weighs upon you?"

"It is, that I—I am—haunted."

"Nonsense!"

"Don't laugh at what I say," she almost wailed.

"Ytol."

"Oh, Captain D'Arcy! that horrid thing we

saw on the ship. It is haunting me. I feel its presence near me at this moment. Yesterday, it looked at me from that very bush—there, pointing to a clump of shrubbery at the side of the path."

"What?—it is here at Wilde Manor?"

"Yes," said Ytol, with a shiver.

The information annoyed him. He was not superstitious; he concluded that the Satanic image was trailing Ytol, to wreak harm upon her. As nothing had been seen of the Dwarf, since the night of his appearance on the quarter-deck of the Petrel, D'Arcy had hoped that he would not again find the young girl.

It was, however, beyond his power to ferret out the being of her terror. He could only encourage her not to fear it, and to keep herself sheltered; and this he strove to do, even while his own heart was full of misgiving for her safety.

"I shall feel that I have no one to protect me, at all, Captain D'Arcy, when you leave. I shall miss you so much—you have been kind to me as if I were your child."

"Keep a stout heart, my dear child. I will come and see you whenever the Petrel is at Liverpool; and while I am away, as I pray to God to preserve me in my dangerous voyage, so, also, will I pray for you—that He may ever have trouble here, go to the Queen's Hotel, and tell them that you are my ward. You will be treated kindly there, for they know me well. I will always be your friend, Ytol; and when the world looks darkest, you can come to my arms and call me 'father!'"

"God bless you, Captain D'Arcy! God bless you!" and one great sob of emotion burst from Ytol's lips, as she looked up into the kind face, when Captain D'Arcy went away she retired to her room, and sat in the twilight gloaming gazing out dreamily over the lawn.

Despite the captain's assuring friendship, her reveries were nettled in mourning; she could not dispel the gloom that shadowed her lonely spirit, and this augmented by the thought of danger that hovered near.

She had a view of the path in which she walked in the afternoon of the day gone; the bushes in which she caught sight of the unearthly features that were haunting her—the features of Catdjo, the Dwarf.

That he had tracked her to Wilde Manor was evident.

As her eyes rested upon the bush a chillness crept into her veins; she imagined the hideous apparition again there, glaring at her.

With a shudder she left the window.

On the morrow she was to begin with the children. She needed rest and newer energies for the task ahead, and sought her couch at an early hour.

CHAPTER XV.
LORD SOMERS MEETS YTOL.

"And if a tear, that speaks regret
Of happier times, appear,
A glimpse of joy that we have met
Shall shine and dry the tear."
—COWPER.

"I saw it—"
"Twas no foul vision—'twas unblinded eyes
I saw it: his fond hands, as once in mine,
Were wreathed in hers."
—MILMAN.

A WEEK elapsed.

Ytol devoted herself ardently to Cecil and Walter, and the youthful scholars were growing to love their preceptor more and more each day.

Mrs. Layworth noticed with pleasure the attachment that had sprung up between teacher and pupils, and amply indicated her satisfaction by her actions toward the young governess.

Ytol was encouraged by approval, and Wilde Manor assumed a sunny look for her.

"You are getting along finely, Miss Lyn."

She was passing through the hall one afternoon, after the recitations of the day, to take her charges out for a stroll. Mrs. Layworth met her at the parlor door, and addressed her pleasantly.

"I am glad you think so, madam," returned she, smiling. "I am doing my best; and I believe your children rather love than fear me. We progress happily, at least."

"Oh, yes!" cried Walter, "to the lake—let's go to the lake and get in a boat."

And Cecil echoed:

"To the lake!"

With Mrs. Layworth's consent they directed their steps thither. It was about a half a mile from the house: a broad pond, surrounded by luxuriant foliage—lying like a glistening mirror beneath the trees. There was a boat-house, with steps leading to the water's edge, and light shells-of-boats, with cushioned seats, and feather-like oars painted gaudily; a kiosk, on a small island; its ebon-hued pillars twined by spirals of blooming vines, and on the top, a ball of bronze that reflected the sun's rays like a blinding flame.

"Can you row, Miss Lyn?" shouted Walter, as he ran down the steps, in high glee.

"I am afraid not. I never tried."

"May I give you a few lessons?" inquired a rich voice at Ytol's side.

"It's Lord Somers!" Walter cried. "He'll show you how. He can row."

Ytol had met the Englishman on several occasions, but never to speak with him until now.

He was a handsome gentleman, exceeding polite, most agreeable of carriage; his dark-gray eyes were like magnets as they fixed upon the young girl, and she felt not a little embarrassed under his gaze.

"Lord Somers."

"I heard you say you could not row. Let me teach you. I have come here for the same sport; so we'll call it 'interest in common,' and I'll do the work. Will you get in?"

At first she thought it best to decline. It might offend Mrs. Layworth; it might seem improper, considering that a positive engagement between him and Ione had been announced. In addition, a disagreeable realization of the insignificant position she occupied, comparatively, made the blushes dye her cheeks, while she stood hesitating. But my lord was persuasive. She yielded, and they were soon skimming merrily away.

He plied the oars with the science of a master, not neglected a happy conversation, eloquent with the romance of their surroundings.

Her reserve vanished; she found herself chatting familiarly as in the first hours of her acquaintance with Jerome Foster, at Rose Grove—arguing with enthusiasm, or listening raptly to accounts of journeys to the Highlands, the oddities of Brighton Beach, and a hundred other gossip topics, at home and abroad, that engaged, interested, or caused her to smile.

The sun was low when they returned to the boat-house. The afternoon had been one of thorough enjoyment to Ytol, and the Englishman had entered zestfully into the spirit of the occasion.

"When am I to have this same pleasure again?" he asked, as they moved away.

"Better not again. It would not be proper."

"Why, pray? Haven't you enjoyed yourself?"

"Indeed I have, and I thank you."

"I hope we'll repeat it, then, soon."

"No, no," said Ytol, quickly.

"Promise me you'll come here to-morrow, and alone—"

"My lord!"

"Do you agree?"

"I must not. Please leave me. See—there is Mrs. Layworth—Miss Ione is with her. It will not appear proper for you to be cultivating the acquaintance of the governess. I bid you good-day."

"Not until you promise to come."

"Consider, sir, what you are doing—"

"Will you promise?"

"Then I promise—to avoid a scene here!"

Taking Cecil and Walter by their hands, she hurried on; and as she went, she asked herself:

"Why does Lord Somers wish me to meet him—and alone? He acts very strangely."

Somers raised his hat as Ytol left him, then turned to join Mrs. Layworth and her daughter, who were approaching by another path.

"All hail!" laughed the mother, as he came up. "We've been roaming without escort."

"I am not out of favor yet, I presume. Please accept. Have you been far?"

Ione was stiffly silent.

"Over to the Lodge. I received an application by this morning's mail from a party wanting to rent. It has been so long unoccupied and neglected that I fear it's hardly tenable. The vines are grown wild, the fence is broken, and cobwebs in every direction."

"Miss Layworth does not seem talkative?" remarked Somers, with a sidelong glance at that young lady.

"I was thoughtful," she answered, carelessly.

"May I buy your reveries?"

"Oh, I'll give them away. I was thinking how enjoyable it would have been to row upon the lake this afternoon."

"Believe me, had I imagined your desires, it would have been our programme."

"Your lack-knowledge in that particular did not deter you, it seems," with an accent of spice.

"Well, no—I was out rowing with Miss Lyn."

Ione inclined her head coldly. Mrs. Layworth did not catch his words.

"I hope you found her society agreeable?" in an icy tone.

"I assure you I did."

Ione bit her lip, to conceal a jealous pang, and her lustrous eyes gleamed like daggers as they flashed, momentarily, upon him.

"What is the name of the party wanting the Lodge, Mrs. Layworth?"

"A female. She signs herself Dwila St. Jean."

"Dwila St. Jean," he repeated. "Rather an attractive name."

"Nearly as pretty as Ytol Lyn," added Ione, with a keen emphasis.

"What's the matter, Ione?" asked Mrs. Layworth.

Somers twirled his side-whiskers indifferently.

"Oh, nothing," replied the daughter, with one of those soulless glances characteristic of the "society" belle.

"But you are singularly—"

"Let us hasten," broke in the Englishman abruptly. "I fear something has happened. There seems to be some excitement. Look!"

The trio hurried forward.

When they reached the house, the hall porter met them, interposing his corpulent body before several servants who were advancing boisterously.

"What does all this mean?" demanded Mrs. Layworth, frowning.

"Why, to see, madam, there's—now, *how* *horrible* there! *horror!*" he cried, with widened eyes and standing hair, as he tried to quiet the men and maids and explain simultaneously. "E see, madam, there's been a goost as 'as been a-coomin' round 'ere, an' 't' governess, poor lass, 'as been frighted by't. That's all, *honny* she's near dead, madam—*horror*, there, do 'e 'ear, now?"

"Miss Lyn has been frightened, you say?"

"Es, madam; that's all."

"Where is she?"

"In 'er room, madam, where we carried 'er, poor lass, all of a-shake."

"Dismiss this rabble immediately. I do not like such disturbance."

"Es, madam—D'y'e 'er ladyship? *hor*der, there, now. Off with 'e, I say. Will 'e not begone when 'er ladyship tells 'e *go*?"

"Mother, I wish to speak with you. Lord Somers, you will please excuse us for a few moments."

"Oh, certainly."

Ione drew her mother to one side.

"It is solved," she said, lowly.

"How? what do you mean?"

"Ytol Lyn is *haunted*."

"Ione!"

"I am sure of it. Mark her worn and weary expression—she constantly wears it; and it can not be overwork. Note the restless glances of her eyes; her timidity; her continual watching in this direction and that. I have seen all this. And now we are told of a ghost. Is it not convincing? Let us lose no more time, but make this girl explain the mystery of her life."

"Yes, we ought to attend to it at once," acquiesced the mother.

"Interview her in your room," suggested Ione, "and show her the veiled picture."

"It shall be done," assented Mrs. Layworth, catching a hint from her daughter's words.

"Stay, mother, one thing more: did you know that Lord Somers and Miss Lyn were out on the lake together, this afternoon?"

"No," in surprise.

"Well, they were." Ione compressed her lips, and began patting with her foot.

"You are not jealous, Ione? I don't think you need fear Miss Lyn."

"I am not jealous, nor would I allow myself to 'fear.' But I do not like what has occurred. I am astonished at it, and I censure her."

"I'll speak to Miss Lyn about it."

At precisely nine o'clock that evening, Ytol received a summons from Mrs. Layworth.

The young girl was in the nursery, at the time, assisting Cecil and Walter at their study.

"There, dears, that will do. You may go to bed, now," she said, kissing them good-night.

"Oh! Miss Lyn, don't look so sad," cried Walter, throwing his arms round her neck.

"Do I look sad?" trying to smile.

"Yes, you do; you look as if you was sick. Are you sick, Miss Lyn?"

"I do not feel well. But I'll be better to-morrow. And, as she started to obey the message from Mrs. Layworth:

"Sick?" dwelling on the child's speech, "yes; oh! how sick. My heart is failing me. I can not live long in this way—with that horrible specter appearing at every turn. Am I to be haunted to death? Have I done any thing to merit this misery which this thing's presence gives me? Oh! Heaven shield me. Let me find some respite, some escape."

CHAPTER XVI.
A STRANGE EFFECT.

"How, ever, and anon, awakes the soul
As with a peal of thunder, to strange horrors
In this long, restless dream."

"What are these,
So withered and so wild in their attire,
That look not like the inhabitants of the earth,
And yet are on it?"

—SHAKESPEARE.

Mrs. LAYWORTH's apartments were in rather a secluded portion of the commodious house, between a double-angle, or recessed wall overgrown with dense vines—where there pervaded a gloomy atmosphere by day, and a grave-like solitude by night.

She and her daughter were sitting at a large round table covered with a fancifully wrought cover of green; and a giant lamp, burning beneath its mellow shade, cast a wavering light around.

They were awaiting Ytol.

When the young governess entered, she paused near the door, and silently returned the searching gaze with which the two regarded her.

"You sent for me, Mrs. Layworth?"

"Yes. Advance, please, and be seated. We wish to talk with you."

When Ytol appropriated a chair:

"You look unwell, Miss Lyn."

"I am not well, madam."

"We desire to touch upon the cause."

"You are very kind. A mere indisposition, madam; I shall be better by to-morrow."

"She is telling a falsehood," thought Ione, who was watching her keenly.

"I want you to tell us, Miss Lyn, what it is that is disturbing your peace of mind. You can not conceal it from us; something is worrying you."

Ytol started, scarce visibly, and the blue eyes raised. The question was repeated.

"If I tell you, madam—"

"Then I shall be satisfied. So, you do admit that there is a mystery connected with you?"

"Yes, Mrs. Layworth," she confessed, subduedly.

"You must explain it to us. First, answer me this: Is your true name 'Lyn'?"

Again she started, again her glance fell; her head bowed, and she answered, lowly:

"It is not."

"Ah!" Ione touched her mother with her foot beneath the table.

"Then, what is it?"

"Oh, Mrs. Layworth!" she cried, looking pleadingly at her questioner, "promise me that I shall not be sent away; promise that you will not drive me from Wilde Manor when you learn what an unfortunate girl I am. Do not shun me and withdraw your protection—I need it, oh! so sorely; and I will tell you all."

"Proceed," with an assenting inclination of the head.

Once more Ytol revealed her brief, sad history, poured out the story of her miserable lot, and the entanglements which fate had woven and seemed even still weaving in her unhappy existence.

Her listeners were strangely interested. Ione, markedly silent throughout, sat like a statue, deeply attentive.

"After all," reminded Mrs. Layworth, "you have not told me your real name."

"Because I do not know what it is. Herbert Lyn gave me his name; I was never called by any other. Yet—stay," remembering the words of her masked tormentor on that fearful night at sea, "I recollect now—once, by the enemies I told you of—"

"They who are haunting you?"

"Yes. By them I was called 'Ytol Dufour'."

"H-al! Ione, do you hear? She was called 'Dufour'!"

"Just as we suspected, mother," observed Ione, quietly. "I think this is beginning to develop."

While they conversed, they dreamed not that there was another party to this interview. An ugly face peered in at the open window, from the thick foliage of a tree whose branches grew close to the sill. A pair of glowing, gleaming, scintillating eyes were fastened, like the orbs of a serpent, on Ytol.

"Ytol," Mrs. Layworth spoke rapidly, "we have reason to believe that we know you. Unless we are greatly mistaken, your father's name was Silas Dufour, and your mother was called Nora."

Ytol did not answer. Surprise was molded in her features; for these were the names mentioned by the masked figure who was her captor on the yacht. What could Mrs. Layworth know of her father and mother, if these were they?

"You say you never saw your mother?"

"Never, I guess; for I do not remember her."

"Perhaps if you saw her you would know."

"If I saw her?" repeated Ytol.

"Yes. What if I were to show you her picture, as she looked in your infant days?"

"Oh, Mrs. Layworth! can it be possible? Did you know my mother? Can you tell me anything of her, and who I am?"

"There was a beseeching eagerness in her tone, her words thrilled with a strangely-born hope, that she might hear something to prove her identity and lift her up from the dark shadows which surrounded her origin."

"I think—ay, I am sure I knew her well." The eyes of the speaker flashed and glittered, and bent with a piercing sternness upon the young girl. She leaned slightly forward; one hand grasped and crushed the cloth of the table.

The look, the force of speech awed Ytol. Those black, dazzling orbs were penetrating to her soul, to reach the tremors of her heart, and discern the nervous feeling which seized her.

Mrs. Layworth, what do you know of my mother?" she gasped, with a short breath.

"I know that I hated her! I know that she robbed me of what I, at one time, held most dear on earth—though now, I half forgive it, for, the man she wedded, and whom I loved, proved to be a worthless drunkard. The same blood that runs in her veins, runs in mine. When I married, she was the cause of my husband deserting me—my first husband, and the father of Ione; I was wedded and widowed twice. You are the child of Nora Dane. Look! Here your mother—"

She arose suddenly, and advanced to the veiled picture.

Tearing aside the crape:

"See! Have you any recollection of her now?"

An indescribable sensation crept into Ytol's veins. The beautiful portrait struck a mysterious chord in her breast; her thoughts went back, back on lightning wings in an effort to conjure up the past associations that linked the likeness in her mind.

Through the lighted corridor of memory, with its countless changes, like paintings on the wall of years—back, back, till the brain paused, aching with its strain. And a dim vision of that face arose in a dream of love's sunshine, caressing her fondly, and lips whispering soft syllables in her baby ears.

It was indistinct—oh, how flickering it came! yet the feeling was there, the weird and hallowed influence, the music of low lullabys that wooed to sweet repose.

She was governed by—she knew not what; mechanically she sunk from the chair to the floor, on her knees.

Her hands clasped with a quick motion; her eyes turned yearningly on the picture; one long, struggling breath, and then:

"My mother!" rung tremulously forth. "Oh, I know it must be my mother—something tells me it must be so. My heart! my heart! Mother!—dear! dear mother! & it you?"

The moaning voice was not her own, it seemed as if another being spoke. She was like one in a trance; she knelt there, oblivious to all, every thing, save the half-ecstatic, half-agonizing contemplation of what she saw.

"Mother, it is she!" cried Ione, starting up.

"We have found the missing heir!"

"And she is my—"

At that instant they were interrupted by a strange cry, like the short, sharp yelp of a snarling dog, followed by a crash of glass—and the long curtains at the windows were dashed in a mass from the cornice.

A figure bounded in upon the floor, a loathsome, griffin-like object, ill-shaped and frightful, and from whose mouth issued a chattering, gibbering sound.

But the Dwarf!

Mrs. Layworth shrank, and was transfixed before the apparition; every vestige of color fled from her cheeks; like a staring corpse she stood against the wall, with one hand outstretched on the papered surface. Not alone her horror at being confronted by a human so hideous; but beneath the guise of deformity and Satanic mien, she discovered something, recognized a familiar countenance, that curdled her blood, that made her heart rise in her throat.

Ione, wildly excited and terrified, took a step forward, then halted, riveted.

But, hark!—footsteps: pattering, shuffling, running footsteps in the hall without.

Ytol's scream had rung and echoed to the ears of the servants below; these, with Lord Somers at their head, were hastening to the apartment.

The Dwarf also heard. A change came over him. Quickly wheeling around, he ran to the table and extinguished the light.

Darkness.

And the dread creature present invisibly!

"Oh, Heaven!" gasped Mrs. Layworth, tottering and groping away from the wall.

"Mother! Mother! where are you?"

Ione heard a sound as if of a falling body.

Then the door was burst open.

The lamp was relighted, and when its rays illuminated the apartment, Somers and the servants drew back apace in amazement and alarm.

Mrs. Layworth and Ytol were lying insensibly on the floor; Ione clung to a chair for support, ghostly white, and quivering from head to foot.

But the Dwarf—the cause of the scene of terror—had disappeared.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 157.)

The Specter Barque.

A TALE OF THE PACIFIC.

BY CAPT. MAYNE REID.

AUTHOR OF "THACKERAY TO DEATH," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER LXXXIV.

UNDESIRABLE'S END.

"HILLO! Hillos! Help! Help!"

The cries come up from the shore in the voice of Grunnet, the coxswain. Quick succeeding, Crozier hears his own name, with the "help, help" reiterated.

Deferring further explanation with Blew, he dashes down toward the beach; Cadwallader and the gold-diggers following: all save two, who stay to guard the robbers who have surrendered.

On clearing the rocky portal they see what is causing the coxswain to shout. Nor do they wonder at his terrified accents. For the sight sends a shiver to their own hearts, they too, simultaneously uttering ejaculations of alarm.

Grunnet is in the boat, standing erect, with the boat hook in his hands. He holds it above his head, still continuing to shout. Four men are making toward him, fast as their legs can carry them. They are coming around the cove along its right side, and have already reached within twenty yards of the boat.

There is no speculation as to who they are. Crozier and Cadwallader recognize two of them on sight—the quicker that they have not turned back, and expected. While the same two were not unknown to some of the gold-diggers, who have seen them in the saloon El Dorado.

The other two—but no matter. That is of slight importance now. The point is to prevent them from seizing the boat and making away with her—their intention, as all can see.

And seeing it, they are thrilled with a sense of danger—a cold, shivering fear. For now they remember they have left scarce any one on board the anchored vessel—only the negro, and another man, with Don Gregorio, an invalid, and Captain Lautanas insane.

Should the escaping pirates succeed in seizing the boat, and boarding the barque, then—an appalling prospect!

They do not dwell upon it, but bend all their energies to arrest the terrible catastrophe. On they go, bounding over bowlders, crushing through shells and pebbles, Crozier at their head. Still they are behind time, and the others must reach the boat before them.

Perceiving this, Crozier calls out, in loud voice:

"Shore off, Grunnet! Get her into deep water. Bear a hand!"

The coxswain, who has been swinging the boat-hook with brandishes around his head, brings it instantly down, point among the pebbles, and, with a desperate effort, shoves the keel clear, sending the boat adrift. But, before he can recover to repeat the push, pistols are fired, and simultaneous with the reports, he is seen going down doubled over the bow-thwart.

A cry of vengeance peals from the pursuing party; maddened, they rush on.

Oh, God! are they too late!

It would seem so.

Over the gunwale of the boat, no longer defended, the four pirates have sprung, each of them having hold of an oar. Already have they dropped down upon the thwarts, shipped

the oars, and dropped blades in the water, and they are yet beyond pistol range!

Oh, God! are they to get away—those guilty wretches?

Ha! Something stays them! God is not for them; the oar-blades rise and fall, but the boat moves not! Her keel is upon coral; her bilge resting upon its rough projections. Their weight pressing down holds her fast, and the oar-stroke is idle.

They had not calculated on this obstruction, which proves the turning point of their fate. No use leaping out now, and lightening the boat, to get her again afloat. Too late for that or any other scheme for escape. There remains only the alternative of resistance, which means death, or surrender, that may seem to promise the same. De Lara would resist, and die; so, also, Rocas. But the other two are against it, instinctively clinging to whatever chance of life may be left them.

The coward, Calderon, cuts short the uncertainty by rising erect, stretching forth his arms in a piteous appeal for mercy.

In an instant after they are surrounded, the boat grasped by the gunwale, and dragged back to the shore; the indignant rescuers with difficulty being restrained from shooting and treading them down upon the thwarts.

They would do this were Grunnet dead. Fortunately, they find him alive, and little hurt, a bullet having struck his skull, creating only stunning him. Assured of his safety, they pull the four pirates out of the boat, and, after disarming, take them to the cave, for a time to be their prison.

Not for long. This is a Judge present before whom trials are short, and sentences quickly followed by execution. It is the celebrated Justice Lynch.

Represented by a stalwart digger—all the others acting as jury—the trial is speedily brought to a termination. For the four Chilianians the verdict is guilty, the sentence death on the scaffold. The others, less criminal, to be carried on to Panama, and there delivered over to the Chilian consul, their crime being the robbing of the Chilian barque.

An exception is made in the case of Striker and Davis. The Sydney Ducks receive conditional pardon, on promise of better behavior throughout all future time. This they obtain by the intercession of Harry Blew, in accordance with the hint given on late leaving them beside the spread tarpaulin.

Of the four sentenced to be hanged, but three in this way suffer execution. The fourth meets his fate in a different manner, though with destiny the same. If not his own wish, by his own doing, De Lara dies first of the four. And not, as they like a scared dog; but a fierce tiger, resisting to the last—the end longing to destroy.

The recovered gold-dust is gathered together, packed and put into the boat. The senioritas are cloaked, impatient to be taken back to the barque, yearning to embrace him they have been long fearing dead. The young officers stand beside them—all awaiting the last scene of the tragedy, which is to be the carrying out of the sentence decreed.

The stage is set for it; this the level spot of ground in front of the greater cave. A rope hangs down, with running noose at the end, its other end, in default of gallows arm and the absence of trees, rigged over the point of a projecting rock.

De Lara is led out first—a digger on each side conducting him. He is not tied or confined in any way; but free, both hand and foot. They have no fear of his making escape. He could not. And knowing this, he has no thought of attempting it.

But a thought of something else—of his resolve mentally made and confessed to Calderon—to kill.

The Swedish purpose comes back to him now, with what chance of executing it?

As he is conducted out of the cave, his eyes, glaring with lurid light, go searching everywhere, till they rest upon a group at less than twenty paces distant. It is composed of four persons, Crozier and Carmen, Montijo—Cadwallader and Inez Alvarez, standing two and two—*vis-a-vis*.

At the last pair De Lara looks not: the first only claim his attention.

One glance he gives them, another to a pistol hoisted on the hip of one of the men guarding him.

A spring, a clutch, and he has possession of it. A bound, and he is off from between the two carelessly conducting him; and runs toward the four who stand apart.

Fortunately for Edward Crozier, for Carmen Montijo as well—there are cries of alarm—shouts of warning, sent by several voices, that reach him together. He turns on hearing them, and sees the approaching danger in time to take steps for arresting it. Simple enough these—the only ones he can think of, only the drawing of his own pistol, and firing at the fiend who advances.

There are two shots, one on each side; though almost simultaneous, one precedes the other by a slight instant of time, enough to decide which must die.

De Lara's pistol cracks last; and as the smoke from it swerves up, the gambler is seen astroke along the sward, red blood spurting out from his breast, and spreading over his shirt.

Harry Blew, rushing up and bending over him, cries out:

"Dead! Shot through the heart—a brave heart, too! What a pity 'twas so black!"

"Come away, *mia querida*," says Crozier to Carmen. "You've had sufficient of the horrible. Let that be the last scene for us. The other we needn't wait to witness."

Taking his betrothed by the hand, he leads her to the boat, Cadwallader with Inez going after. All four seat themselves in the stern-sheets, and wait for the diggers to come down.

They soon appear, conducting their prisoners, the former crew of the Condor, all but four. These they have left behind—a banquet for bald vultures and crested *caracaras*!

CHAPTER LXXXV.

THE SAILOR'S STORY.

THE Chilian barque has rounded Cabo Mala, and is standing for the port of Panama.

With a full crew—most of them able seamen—no fear that she will reach it now. Crozier in command has restored Harry Blew to his position of first officer, which so far from having forfeited, he now doubly deserves.

Enfeebled by the long period of privation, the ex-man-o'-war's man is excused from duty, Cadwallader doing it for him. He is strong enough however to tell the two young officers that which they are impatient to hear—the story of the Specter Barque. Occupied in attention for the recovered sweethearts, they have deferred seeking the full explanation, which only the sailor can give them.

Now, on the morning after sailing from Montijo Bay, they demand it. Calling him before them on the quarter-deck, Harry Blew begins:

"Your honors: it's a twisted-up yarn from the start up to the time ye hove in sight; an' if ye hadn't showed up the twist out in the nick o' time, an' ta'en the twist out o' it, hard to say how 'twould have ended. No doubt in all o' us dyin' on that desert island, an' leavin' our bones

there. Thank the Lord for our delivery, without any disparagement to what's been done by yourselves, gentlemen. Sure He must ha' sent you, an' has had a guidin' hand throughout the whole thing. I can't help thinkin' so, when I look back on the scores o' strange chances that seemed goin' against the good, but have sheered round to it after all."

"True," assents Crozier, honoring the devout ascribing it to Divine interference. Certainly, God's hand has been extended in our favor. But go on!"

"Well, to begin at the beginnin', which is when you left me in San Francisco. As I told Master Willie that day he come ashore in the dingy, I was engaged to go chief mate in the Chilian barque. She war then a ship; afterward converted, 'count o' shortness o' hands. When I first went aboard, an' for some days after, I war myself the only thing in the shape o' a sailor or she'd got. Then her captain, that poor crazed creature below, put advertisements in the papers, offerin' big pay. That, as I then supposed, brought aboard eleven chaps callin' themselves sailors, an' shippin' as such. One o' 'em, for want o' better, war made second-mate—his name bein' entered in the books as Padillo. He war the last o' the three swung up, an' if ever a man deserved hangin', he did, being the cusdest scoundrel o' the whole lot. Well, after we'd waited another day or two, an' no more making appearance, the skipper concluded to start. Then the old gentleman along wif the two saynoretas came aboard, when we cleared an' stood out to sea. Afore leavin' port I had a suspicion about the sort o' crew we'd shipped. But soon we war fairly afore it got to be somethin' worse than suspicion. I warartin then we'd an ugly lot to deal with. Still at first I only believed them to be bad men, an' if that war possible, worse sailors. I expect them turnin' mutinous. But on the second night after leavin' land, I found out what proved them somethin' o' a still darker color—that war nothin' more nor less than a set o' piratical conspirators. Also that they had a plan ready laid out. A lucky chance led me to discover their infernal scheme. The two we've agreed to let go, by name Jack Striker an' Bill Davis, both old birds from the convict ships of Australia, war talkin' it over between themselves, an' I chanced to overhear them. What they said made every thing clear, as it also made my hair stand on end. 'Twar a plot to plunder the ship o' the gold-dust Don Gregorio had got in her, an' carry off the dear girls. At the same time they war to scuttle the vessel an' sink her first knockin' the old gentleman on the head, as also the skipper, besides sarvin' your humble servant the same way. The cook war to be similarly disposed o'. On listenin' to the diabolical plot, I war craid dumbfoundered, an' for a while didn't know what to do. 'Twar a case o' life an' death; the last sartin for some o' us, an' for the saynoretas somethin' worse. At first I thort o' tellin' Captain Lautanas, an' also Don Gregorio. But then I seed that if I did it would only make death surer to all o' us as war doomed. I knowed the skipper to be a man o' innocent, unsuspecting nature, an' mightn't believe in such a scheme o' durned rascality bein' possible. More like he'd let out right away, an' bring on the bloody 'bushness sooner than they intended. From what Striker an' Davis said, I made out that it war to be kept back till we should sight land somewhere near Panama. After a big spell o' thinkin' I seed a sort o' long way out o' it—the only way appearin' possible. 'Twar this: to purtend joinin' wif the conspirators, an' puttin' myself at their head. I'd larnt from the talk o' the Sydney ducks there war a split 'mong the pirates 'bout the deividin' o' the gold-dust. I seed this would g'e me a chance to put in along wif them. Takin' advantage o' it, I broached the bizness to Striker that same night, an' got into their councils, afterward obtainin' the influence I wanted. Mind, gentlemen, it took a good deal o' trickery an' maneuverin'. Among other things I had to show hostile to the cabin people all the voyage, 'specially to them two sweet creature's. Many's the time my heartacked thinkin' o' your sweethearts, an' what might happen to 'em, if I should fail in my plan for protectin' 'em. When they wanted to be free an' friendly, an' would begin talkin' to me, I had to answer 'em gruff an' growlin'. For I knowed that eyes war on me all the while, an' ears listenin'."

"As to tellin' 'em what war before, or givin' them the slimmest hint o' it, that would 'a' spoilt every thing. In course they'd ha' gone straight to the old gentleman, an' then it'd 'a' been all up wif us. It war clear that all couldn't be saved. An' that Don Gregorio himself 'ud hev to be sacrificed, as also the skipper and the cook. 'Twar dreadful hard, but that could be no help for it. I knew I'd have enough on my hands in takin' care o' the weemen, and save them from the scoundrels as wanted to be their ruin. As the Lord has allowed it, in the end all have been saved."

The speaker pauses to take breath. His listeners knowing it is but for this, silently wait for him to continue.

Resuming speech, he says:

"At last, on sightin' land, as agreed on, the day had come for the doin' o' the dark deed. 'Twar after night when we set about it, myself actin' as a sort o' recognized leader. I'd played my part so to get some control o' the rest. We first lowered a boat, puttin' our things into her. Then we separated, some to lay hands on the gold-dust, others to seize upon the saynoretas. I let Gomez look after this, for fear o' bringin' on trouble too soon. Me an' Davis, who is a sort o' ship's carpenter, were to do the scuttlin', an' for that purpose went down into the hold. I appealed to him to give the Don and skipper a chance for their lives, an' let the barque float a bit longer. Though he be a Sydney duck, he warnt so bad as some of the rest. He consented, an' we returned to the deck without tappin' the barque's bottom timbers. Soon's I got my head over the hatch coamin' I seed they'd all got in to the boat, the young ladies along wif 'em. I didn't know what they'd done to the Don and skipper. I had my fears about 'em, but they might ha' knocked 'em on the head as war first proposed. But I aren't go down to the cabin, lest they might shove off and leave us in the lurch, as some o' them war threatenin' to do. If they'd done that—well, it's no use sayin' what would ha' been the end o' all. I seed it would knock all my plans on the head, an' seein' that, hurried down into the boat. All in, we rowed right away, leavin' the barque just as she'd been the whole o' that day. As we pulled shoreward, we could see her standin' off, all her sail set, same as if she had a full crew attendin' 'em."

"But her ensign reversed—her flag of distress? She was flyin' it when we came across her. How about that, Harry?"

"Ah! the bit o' buntin' upside down! I did that myself, thinkin' it might g'e the poor creature's a better chance o' bein' picked up an' saved. I did it in the dark afore me an' Davis went below, takin' care to let none o' 'em see me."

"And by doin' it every thing has come right. Leaving it undone, all might have gone the other way. What a strange chance! But surely it has been the hand o' God. But for that signal the Crusader might have passed

without giving chase; and instead of our being here, we—b—t proceed! Tell us all that happened afterward."

"Well, we landed on the island, not knowin' it to be an island. An' there's another o' the chances, showin' we've been took care o' by the cherub as sits aloft. If 't had been the main land, every thing must ha' turned out different; sure to ha' done so. I'd 'a' protected the girls all the same, or died tryin' to. But for all that I mightn't ha' been able."

"Go on, tell us what happened ashore!"

The young officers are eager to hear the continuation. They have anxious thoughts about what may have occurred in the blank of time not yet covered by the sailor's narrative. The conversation had with their sweethearts has made known some of them; not all. There are points too delicate to have been touched on.

"After landing," resumes the narrator, "we stayed all night on the shore, the men sleepin' in the big cave, the saynoretas in that you seed them in. I took care about that myself, determined that they shouldn't come to any harm. There war things happened that night which I dare say they've told you, an' 'twar then I first larnt that Mr. Gil Gomez and Louis Hernandez war no other than two o' the chaps who attacked you in the streets o' San Francisco. No matter for that. Things had to be settled all the same. Mornin' comin' on, we found the boat had gone away from her moorings, and drifted to be broke on the breakers. No matter for that, either; we wanted her no more, as we meant to steer inland. Then came the mearsurin' out o' the gold dust into shares for all alike. After that, the question as to who should get the girls. It'd been waitin' for all the time. Mr. Gomez and his pal, Hernandez, war the two who had special claim to 'em, as I knowed and expected they would. Pretendin' a likin' for Miss Carmen myself, an' puttin' Davis up to do the same for 't'her, we two put in our claim. It ended in Gomez an' me goin' for a fight, which must 'a' ended in the death o' one or other. I had no fear about dyin', an' war only vexed at the idea, it might leave the poor girls without protection. Still Davis had giv'n me a promise he'd do the best he could; as there war no help for it, I'd agreed to the duel, which war to be fought first wif pistols and ended up wif cutlasses. Every thing settled, we war about pickin' in when one o' the fellows, who'd gone up the cliff to look ahead, just then sung out tellin' us we'd landed on an island. Recallin' the lost boat, that meant a good deal o' danger, and stopped the fight for a time. When we all got up to the cliff and saw how things stood, there war no more quarrelin'. The piratical scoundrels were all tamed then, an' would ha' been glad to get back aboard the barque, we'd abandoned. I confess I war scared like the rest o' 'em, same time havin' some reason to be glad. After that it war all safe, as far as concerned the saynoretas. To Mr. Gomez and Hernandez they war but a second thought in the face o' sheer starvation, the which soon come upon us, continuin' for ten long days and nights till we seed the bark comin' back. I hain't heard your story yet, nor how the Condor is here, wif yourself o' board o' her. But you've had mine, and now ye know how Harry Blew has behaved, an' how he's kept his word to you in San Francisco."

"Kept your word like a man! Behaved nobly, grandly, in both, as might be expected from an American sailor!"

It is Crozier who speaks, continuing:

"Come to my arms! to my breast, Harry Blew; let me press you! Forgive the suspicions I had, because I could not help them. Here, Cadwallader! Take him to your breast, and show that both are grateful to the man who has done far more for us than if he had saved our own lives. Bless you, Blew, Heaven bless you!"

The midshipman promptly responds to the appeal, and receives Harry Blew from the embrace of the lieutenant, only to hold him in a hug that near threatens his strangulation.

Our story is told. Aught remaining unrevealed, the reader can easily guess; saving the narrator details, that might be extended to at least a score of chapters.

TEN YEARS OLDER.

BY HAP HAZARD.

Oh! you little midget,
Sitting on my knee!
You're a little fidget,
One can plainly see!
How your bright eyes sparkle
With their all-delight!
How they flash and dangle
Like the stars at night!
Wonder if this midget
Thus would let me hold her,
If (the little fidget!)
She were ten years older!

Oh! you little fairy,
Clinging to my neck!
Weaving chaplets airy,
My sterna brows to deck!
Whispering that love me
With sweetest naivete!
When caprice doth move thee,
Flitting swift away!
Wonder would this fairy
Be thus warm or colder,
If (the vixen airy!)
She were ten years older!

A Diplomatic Failure.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

"I do wonder if she does love me?"
Away through the purpling shadows of that
calm quiet evening Raymond Rostine looked,
as though from such a quarter would come an
answer to his earnest self-questioning.
"She's so pretty, with her liquid blue eyes
and hair like molten sunshine, and her slender
figure as graceful as a witch-hazel! I do real-
ly wonder if she'll have me if I ask her?"
Evidently the subject was not easily settled
to Mr. Rostine's mind, for a sudden exclamation
arose to his lips as a light buggy dashed
past his window, down toward the village.
"Confound that old fool! I'll bet five dol-
lars he's going down to see Florrie again! and if
he should win her."

He bit his cigar almost through at the
thought.

"Effie Denver would hardly put up with old
Crawford, though! he's so deuced ugly and
straight-faced in his ideas. If she were a poor
girl, now—as poor as myself, for instance—
there'd be some reason for her taking the old
miser; but so long as she's got plenty of money
in her own right, I imagine she'll go in for
youth and good looks, and style."

Mr. Rostine stretched his neck to catch a
glimpse of himself in the glass over the low
mantel-shelf; and the self-satisfied smile he
gave, told plainer than language could have
done that he did not regard himself as at all de-
ficient in the three requisite characteristics.

"Yes, Miss Denver is a beauty, a perfect la-
dy, an heiress—and I think somewhat in love
with me."

Then he leaned back in the chair and medi-
tatively puffed away at his cigar.

"I'll do it—to-morrow, when I promised her
I'd call and take her carriage-riding—got to
borrow the money from Foster, too, to hire the
team. I'll propose, so I will, to marry the
charming heiress, and live in clover—Hello,
Foster! you're just the imp I wanted to see.
Lend me ten dollars, will you?"

"Another spree, eh?"

"Not this time, old boy. Didn't you know I
was reformed? Going to propose to Miss Den-
ver, the heiress, and—"

Foster uttered a long, low whistle, then drew
in his lips in the most utter contempt.

"Miss Denver, boarding down at the
Evans'?"

"Exactly. That tall, ladylike girl who wears
the pearl earrings, you know—Miss Effie Den-
ver, the heiress."

"Rostine, you're caught! Bless me, didn't
you know it had all leaked out at last? how
she is no heiress at all, only a school-teacher
come down for her vacation?"

"I—what? Nonsense, though, Foster; I
don't believe it. Why, I tell you she wears
pearls."

Pearls he—well, never mind. Only, if
that's your game, you'd better be warned.
Hold on, Rostine; I'll prove it to you, or my
word goes for nothing. Get your hat and come
down past Mrs. Evans'—this heiress of yours
gives the girls music lessons to pay her board-
bill. Maybe you'll believe your own eyes."

Raymond Rostine was looking wofully luga-
brious as he took down his hat.

"Of course I'll believe my eyes, Foster," he
said, sadly.

Sure enough, as the two young men sauntered
slowly past Mrs. Evans' house, where the
lace curtains afforded free survey of the lighted
back parlor, were plainly heard the monotonous
drumming of the piano, and at intervals
Miss Effie Denver's voice in encouragement or
correction.

Then the lesson came to an end, and they
heard little Minnie Evans say, in tones of un-
biased delight:

"Oh, Miss Denver, you are just the very
nicest teacher I ever had."

Foster nudged Rostine, and Rostine whis-
pered:

"Never mind that ten dollars; I'm back to
town to-morrow."

Mr. Raymond Rostine had not exaggerated
at all when he had mentally described Effie
Denver.

She was pretty, and perhaps had never looked
prettier than that cool September morning
when she awaited Mr. Rostine's coming for the
carriage-ride to Hadden Spring. She had
dressed herself in a black grenadine, and wore
heavy, dead-gold ornaments, and a glowing
scarlet sash about her waist that matched in hue
the heron's plume in her jaunty little hat. A
scarlet and white plaid shawl lay near at hand
to don on the way if the fresh breeze blew cool-
er than it then was.

She looked a little impatiently at her watch,
and as she replaced it in her belt, glanced down
the shady road.

The truth was, she was not a little vexed at
this tardiness of her admirer, this handsome
gentleman who rejoiced in the euphonious name
of Raymond Rostine, and who had mentioned,
so casually and matter-of-factly, his villa on the
banks of the Hudson, which, unfortunately for
his comfort, was undergoing repairs; hence the
reason he was rusticated at Greenwood. Effie
Denver, though a beauty and an heiress, was a
thoroughly sensible girl, with a dash of roman-
ce about her that lent an air of irresistible
grace and witchery to her personal charms.

And she had been dreaming very sweet
dreams, as girls of nineteen will do, about this
handsome-faced Raymond Rostine.

Now, why were not his horses and his car-
riage at the door? She felt vexed about it, and
undecided whether to blame him for his tardi-
ness or her watch for being stupidly fast.

"Mr. Rostine seems inclined to take his lei-
sure this morning," she remarked to Mrs. Se-
van, who was arranging a glass dish of gor-
geous-hued autumn flowers.

"Mr. Rostine?—why if I had known it was
he you were waiting for, I might have told you
I saw him take the early train while I was at
the post-office."

"You did, Mrs. Sevan?" and Effie paled, then
flushed, then after a moment laughed.

"Well, it makes very little difference; I'll
take a walk to see my little music pupils."

"Anybody would think you were obliged to
teach those Evanses, Miss Denver. It's hard-
ly the business for an heiress like you."

Effie laughed and fastened her gloves with a
superb set of buttons and chains.

"It's a labor of love, Mrs. Sevan, and little
Minnie openly congratulated me last night on
being her best teacher."

"But all the folks'll think you are obliged
to; they really will, Miss Denver. Why, I
heard only this morning that Wallace Foster
told Mr. Rostine you were only a music-teacher.
The chambermaid heard him."

So, here was the reason of her gallant lover's
dereliction in duty, was it?

Well, Effie was glad she had escaped him,
and her heart was light as air as she walked
through the village street.

"That was altogether a mistake, Raymond—
you remember what I told you about Miss
Denver down at Greensward last summer?"

"A mistake?" and Rostine felt qualmish at
the sudden thought that occurred to him.

"Yes, about her being no heiress at all, and
obliged to give music lessons. You see she is
engaged to Frank Evans, and he told me how
he fell in love with her giving friendly instruc-
tion to his sister's children; he courted her un-
der the impression she was only such, and now,
he'll marry a hundred thousand. Cute, ain't
he?"

Rostine fairly choked with rage.

"So near, and yet so far!" had that same hun-
dred thousand been to him!

Well, he cursed his own ill-luck, and he
cursed Foster for his "meddling impudence,"
and—couldn't do any more.

you, there wouldn't have been any need of
bringing you into my house. All that would
be necessary would be to speak your name in
the middle of this station. Why, the very
sticks themselves that form the stockade would
rise out of the ground to seize you, to say no-
thing of the men."

"For whom do you take me?" asked the
stranger, in a hoarse voice.

"For the man for whose body, dead or alive,
the settlers on the border would give more than
they would for any other man that walks upon
earth, be his skin white or red," replied Mur-
dock.

The stranger glanced at him with sullen
eyes.

"Be assured, however," continued the young
man, "that I mean you no harm. On the con-
trary, I need your aid, and I'm willing to pay
you well for it. Come, is it a bargain?"

"You know my name?" said the stranger,
slowly, without replying to the question.

"Yes, you are—" and Murdock, bending
over, whispered a name in the ear of the stran-
ger. "Am I right?" he asked.

"Yes," said the stranger, sullenly. "But I
can not understand how you penetrated my
disguise."

"Particularly when it deceived Boone and a
half a score of your deadly foes, who would be
almost willing to give ten years of their lives to
draw a bead on you at fair rifle range."

"That is possible," replied the other; "but
the bullet is not yet run that will take my life."

"If I were to call out your name from that
door, a long rope and a short shirt would save
the bullet the trouble," said Murdock.

The stranger winced at the words.

before a dozen others, that I lied. I gave the
lie back in his teeth, for I never took insult
from mortal man. Then he struck me. I
didn't think even for a moment that he was
my superior officer; all that I knew was that I
was struck—degraded by a blow. I measured
him with my eye and felled him to my feet
with a single stroke. Then I was seized—tried
by a drumhead court-martial, and sentenced to
be publicly whipped in presence of the whole
army, and I was whipped, too. As the lashes
fell upon my naked back, and cut long quiver-
ing lines in the yielding flesh, with every lash I
swore a bitter oath of vengeance. Then, my
punishment done—a whipped, degraded slave,
a man no longer—they untied me. I sunk
down at their feet almost helpless. They
raised me up; I was covered with my own
gore. This General Treveling—then only a
colonel—looked on me, his victim, with a
scornful smile—ten thousand curses on him!
I was maddened with rage. I shook my fist
defiantly in his face, and before all I said:
"Your quarters shall swim in blood for this!"
I kept my word. I have shed white blood
enough along the Ohio for me to swim in.
My vengeance, too, against this man was fear-
ful. I stole his eldest child—left it to die, in
the forest. I tore his heart as his lashes had
torn my back. And now, I strike him a second
time."

Murdock gazed at the rage-inflamed counte-
nance of the dark-skinned man with a feeling
akin to awe.

"It is a bargain, then, between us?" the
young man said.

"Yes; to get another chance at him, I'd go
through the fires of hell!" the other replied.



The scout was in a trap from which there was no escape.

RED ARROW. THE WOLF DEMON; OR, The Queen of the Kanawha.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN.

AUTHOR OF "ROCKY MOUNTAIN BOB," "THE MAN FROM
TEXAS," "OVERLAND KIT," "RED MAZEPPA," "AGE
OF SPADERS," "HEART OF FIRE," "WITCHES
OF NEW YORK," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SCHEME OF CLEMENT MURDOCK.

The stranger turned in no little surprise at
being accosted by the young man.

"Did you speak to me, stranger?" he asked.

"Yes," answered Murdock; "I should like
to have a few minutes' conversation with you if
it is agreeable."

The stranger shot a rapid glance at the face
of the young man, but he saw nothing therein
to alarm him.

"Certainly," he replied, after thinking for a
moment.

"This is my shanty," said Murdock, refer-
ring to the log-house before whose door they
stood. "Come in; we can talk inside without
being overheard."

There was a strange expression upon the
face of the other. He cast a rapid glance
around him, and laid his hand upon the handle
of the hunting-knife at his girdle, as if he had
half a mind to stab the young man—who was
fumbling with the rude fastenings of the door—
and then make a bold break for freedom and
the woods. But the momentary glance around
convinced him—that is, if he had such an idea
—that to carry it out would be hopeless, for a
dozen or more of the settlers were between him
and the forest. So, with a muttered curse upon
his ill-luck, he followed Murdock into the cabin.

Murdock produced a flask of whisky and a
couple of tin cups, and motioning his rather
unwilling guest to draw near the table, he
pledged him with the fragrant corn-juice.

The stranger tossed off the fiery liquor with a
moody brow. He suspected that he was in a
trap, and he felt far from being easy.

"Do you know that your face is strangely
familiar to me?" asked Murdock, with a mean-
ing smile.

"Indeed! that is strange," responded the
other, half inclined to spring upon the young
man, for he felt a strong apprehension that his
disguise was penetrated.

"I think we have met before," said Murdock,
with another look full of meaning.

"I don't remember ever meeting you," re-
plied the stranger, who now almost repented
that he hadn't made a bold dash for freedom
when at the door.

"I feel sure that we have met," said Murdock.
"How may I call your name?"

"James Benton," replied the other.

"From Virginia?"

"Yes."

"Well, I have never met a Mr. Benton," said
Murdock.

"I was sure that you were in error when you
said that you knew me," said the stranger, with
an air of relief.

"Not as Benton, but under another name, I
have met you."

"Ah!" The hand of the stranger sought the
handle of his knife. The movement was not un-
noticed by the keen eye of Murdock.

"Don't be alarmed; I mean you no harm,"
he said, quickly. "If I had wished to denounce

"Don't be alarmed, I don't mean to betray
you," continued Murdock. "It was an astonish-
ing thing that I alone should penetrate your
disguise and guess who you were. I never saw
you but once before, either, and that was years
ago. But now to business. As I said before, I
need your aid, and I am willing to pay you well
for it."

"What is it you want me to do?"

"There's a girl in the settlement that has re-
jected my advances. I don't care so much for
her, but she's the heiress to a large fortune.
Now, if she marries me, of course I get the
fortune, or if she dies, I get the fortune, for I
am the next heir. Now, I don't want to take
the life of the girl if I can help it. I had much
rather marry her; but, unfortunately, she has
taken a fancy to some one else, and won't listen
to my suit. Now, my plan is to carry the girl
off. I know a lonely cabin, now deserted, some
ten miles from the station on the other bank of
the Kanawha. I want the girl carried there,
and the impression given to her that she is a
prisoner in the hands of the Indians. Then I'll
pretend to follow on the trail—gain access to
the cabin; offer to assist her to escape, if in re-
ward she'll marry me. Of course she'll feel
grateful for the risk I run for her sake, and
consent. Then I'll escape with her, take her
back to the settlement, and the thing is done."

"But, suppose she refuses to marry you?"

"Then she won't escape from the hands of the
red-skins, but they'll kill her," said Mur-
dock, coolly.

"And in that case, you'll come in for the prop-
erty?"

"Exactly."

"The plan ought to work," said Benton,
thoughtfully.

"I don't see how it can fail. I want your
assistance, and I've got a fellow in the station
that will help me. You two will be enough to
play Indian. It won't be much trouble and
very little risk, and I'll pay well for it."

"When do you want it done?" asked the
stranger.

"The sooner the better," replied Murdock.
"I suppose that will suit you."

"Yes, for I'll soon have other fish to fry
along the border," said the other, and a demon
light gleamed from his eyes.

"Do you expect to drive the whites from
the Ohio?" asked Murdock.

"No, but I'll raise such a blaze along the
river, and strike such a blow that it shall be
felt, even to Virginia!" cried the other, in a
tone of fierce menace.

"It will be a bloody time," said Murdock,
thoughtfully.

"Yes, blood will run like water," replied the
stranger. "But what is the name of the girl
that is to be carried off?"

"Virginia Treveling."

"The stranger started as though he had trod-
den upon a snake.

"What, the daughter of General Treveling?"
he cried.

"Yes," replied Murdock, wondering at the
look of fierce delight that swept over the face
of the other.

"Hell's fires!" cried the other, in triumph.
"I'll do the job for you. I owe the father a
bitter grudge. I struck him one blow, some
twelve years ago, just after he wronged me. I
doubt if he's forgotten or forgiven it to this
day. It's about time for me to strike him an-
other."

"Why, how did General Treveling ever
wrong you?" asked Murdock, in wonder.

"I was a scout under him in Dunmore's
campaign. One day he told me openly, and

And so the compact was made.

CHAPTER VIII.

BOONE IN A TIGHT PLACE.

EARNESTLY and with anxious faces the set-
tlers discussed the chances of the coming war.
With one voice Colonel Boone was selected
as the commander of the station.

Messengers were dispatched to warn the
neighboring settlements.

Then Boone, taking Kenton and Lark aside,
suggested that they should make a scout into
the Shawnee country and discover, if possible,
against which settlement the Indian attack
would be directed.

The suggestion suited well with the bold and
daring spirit of the border, and both Kenton
and Lark gladly expressed their willingness to
accompany the skillful and daring woodman.

Boone gave Jackson a hint as to his inten-
tion, and then the three left the settlement and
entered the forest, heading toward the Ohio.

Reaching the river, Lark drew from a little
tangled thicket near the river's bank a canoe.
He had previously hidden it there when he had
crossed the Ohio on his way from the
Shawnee country to Point Pleasant.

By means of the canoe the three crossed the
river. On the northern bank they concealed
the canoe in a thicket, and then, striking to the
north-west toward the Scioto river, they plunged
into the wilderness and took the trail lead-
ing to the villages of the Shawnee nation.

On through the tangled thickets went the
three rangers, all their senses on the alert to
discover traces of the hostile red-skins.

After many a weary hour's march, the three
came near to the village of Ke-ne-ha-ha.

Then they proceeded with increased caution.
As yet they had not seen a single trace that de-
noted the presence of the Shawnees.

The scouts were now within some two miles
of Chillicothe, where Ke-ne-ha-ha's village was
located.

Then Boone called a halt.

"Now, boys," said the leader, "we are
nigh to the red devils, and we must be careful
or we'll stumble upon some of 'em afore we know
it. I think our best plan is to find some hid-
ing-place to serve for a head-quarters, and then,
separately, after dark, we'll scout into the vil-
lage, and maybe we'll be able to discover some
of the plans of the red varmints."

"I know just the place for us," said Lark.
"We're nigh to it, too."

Then Lark piloted the way through the for-
est—the three had been standing by the bank
of the Scioto—and at last halted by a huge oak
tree, at the base of which grew a tangled mass
of bushes.

"Hyer's the spot," said Lark, pointing to the
tree.

"Whar?" asked Boone, who could not per-
ceive any hiding-place except it was in the
branches of the oak.

"Hyer."

Then Lark parted the tangled bushes with
his hand. Boone and Kenton saw that the
trunk of the oak was hollow. It contained a
cavity, fully large enough to afford a secure re-
fuge to the three, and the bushes closing behind
them after they had entered the hollow oak
completely concealed them from sight.

"This hyer is an old hidin'-place o' mine,"
said Lark, as they stood within the hollow. "I
diskivered it one day when I shot a bar nigh
hyer. The bar made for this bit of bush. He
had his den in this very tree-trunk. I followed
him up an' that's the way I diskivered it."

The shade of night was now fast descend-

ing upon the earth, and darkness was vailing in
the forest and river with its inky mantle.

"Now we'll scout into the village," said
Boone; "we'll meet hyer ag'in in the morn-
ing—that is, if the savages don't captivate us."

"Agreed," responded the two others, and
then all three left the hollow oak.

With a silent pressure of the hand they se-
parated, each one picking out a path for him-
self, but all tending in the direction of the vil-
lage of Ke-ne-ha-ha.

The three hunters had been gone some ten
minutes when a dark form stood by the oak.

He plunged his eyes carefully into the dark-
ness that surrounded him, as if fearful of being
watched.

At last, apparently satisfied that no human
eye looked upon his movements, carefully and
cautiously he separated the bushes in front of the
oak, and entered the hollow space within the
tree. The bushes closed with scarce a rustle
behind him.

The insects of the night who had been dis-
turbed and awed to silence by the tread of the
light foot, that prowled so cautiously along the
dim aisles of the forest, began again their noc-
turnal cries.

The tree-toads cried, and the crickets chir-
ruped. The air seemed full of life. The owl—
the minion of the night—came forth from his
perch in the tree-trunk. The young moon, too,
rising, cast its silver sheen over the forest.

Then again, suddenly, the voices of the night
sunk into silence, for, forth from the hollow of
the oak, that the three daring scouts had select-
ed for their rendezvous, came the dark figure
that but a few minutes before with stealthy
step had stolen beneath the leafy branches. It
was evident that the secret of the hollow tree
was known to another than the scouts.

Cautiously through the forest stole the dark
form. The tree-toad hushed its cries; the
cricket noiselessly crept to its hole; the owl
peered forth from his cavity in the tree-trunk,
and then, with its great eyes shining with fear,
shrunk back within the darkness of its lair,
when it caught sight of the dark form that so
silently glided amid the trees.

On went the dark form through the forest.
All living things seemed to shrink from it in
horror.

The moonbeams, slanting down and tinging
the green of the forest top with rays of silvery
light, fell upon the figure as it glided through a
little opening in the woods.

The moonbeams defined the figure of a huge
gray wolf, who walked erect like a man, and
who had the face of a human. The dark form
held in its paw an Indian tomahawk.

The moonbeams were gleaming upon the
Wolf Demon, the terrible scourge of the Shaw-
nee tribe.

On through the forest went the hideous form,
almost following in the footsteps of the scout,
Kenton, who had little idea of the terrible crea-
ture that lurked behind him.

Boone had selected the bank of the river as
his pathway to the village of the Indians.

Carefully the ranger proceeded onward.

As he approached near to the Shawnee vil-
lage, he could hear the sound of the Indian
drums and the war-cries of the warriors.

From the sounds Boone easily guessed that
the Indians were preparing for the war-path.

excursion to the ravine where she had been rescued from the bear by him.

Gladly Winthrop announced his willingness to accompany her.

So the two set out for the ravine.

They passed down through the station and took the trail leading up the Kanawha.

As they walked onward, chatting gayly together, they had no suspicion that they were closely followed by three men, who, holding a consultation together on the edge of the timber, had noticed them as they passed.

Leaving the trail, the girl and the young man walked into the ravine.

The three men, who had followed him so closely, paused at the entrance to the gorge, apparently to consult together.

"The fellow is her lover, as I guessed," said the foremost of the three, the one who had been the most eager to follow the two.

"It looks like it," said the taller of the two others, who was the dark-skinned stranger, who had called himself Benton.

The third one of the party was a wretched fellow who hung about the station, ready to drink "corn-juice" when he could get it, and fit but for little else.

He was known as Bob Tierson.

"I'd give him a lead of buckshot if he came after my gal," said Bob, who was somewhat given to boasting.

"Perhaps I may," replied Murdock, who was the leader of the party. He spoke with an angry voice, and a lowering cloud was upon his sallow face.

"If the young fellow was out of the way, this would be a good opportunity to try the Indian's game," said Benton, suggestively.

"If it was me, I'd put him out of the way mighty doggoned quick!" exclaimed Bob, who seldom lost an opportunity of telling what he would do.

"For the first time in your life, Bob, you've said a wise thing," said Murdock.

"For the first time!" cried Bob, in indignation. "Wal, I reckon now, I don't take a back seat to any man in the station."

"In drinking whisky? No, you don't, to do you justice," said Murdock, sarcastically. "But, Benton, can you fix up the Indian now?"

"Yes, easily enough," replied the one addressed. "I've got the pigment to paint our faces with in my pouch. Just lend me your hunting shirt, and take my coat."

"How about your hair?"

"Tie a handkerchief over it, nigger-fashion," suggested Bob.

"Yes, that will do," said Murdock. "The girl will be so frightened that she won't be apt to notice you much. Tie a handkerchief over her eyes the moment you grab her."

"And the young fellow?" asked Bob.

"Leave him to me," and Murdock tapped the butt of his rifle significantly.

"And you'll leave him to the wolves, eh?" said Bob, with a grin.

"I shouldn't wonder," replied Murdock, dryly.

"But the report of the rifle—if it should be heard at the station—"

"A hunter after game, that's all," said Murdock. "But come, let's lose our game; I have an idea that there'll be a love-scene between the two up the ravine, and I'd like to be a looker-on." Murdock ground his teeth at the very thought.

So, cautiously and slowly, the three left the little trail by the banks of the Kanawha, and followed in the footsteps of Virginia and Winthrop up the ravine.

The girl and the young man reached the spot where the encounter with the bear had taken place, and there they halted.

The quick eye of the girl caught sight of the drops of blood dried upon the rock, where the bear had fallen and died.

"See," she said, pointing to the spots upon the rock; "but for your blood would have stained the stone instead of the brute's."

"And but for that strange girl who came so aply to my rescue, my blood might have been there, too," said Winthrop.

"It was a moment of terrible peril," and Virginia half-shuddered at the bare remembrance.

"Yes; but it was evidently not your fate to die by the claws and teeth of the bear."

"What will my fate be?" said the girl, reflectively.

"A bright and happy one, I hope," replied Winthrop. "I am sure that you deserve none other."

"Ah!" said the girl; "but we do not get our deservings in this world." As she spoke she sat down upon a rock that cropped out of the ground and looked up into the face of the young man with her clear, bright eyes. In his heart Winthrop thought that he had never seen such clear, innocent eyes before.

"You should get yours," replied Winthrop, "or else there isn't any justice in this world."

"I hope so," said Virginia, half-sadly.

"How beautiful the forest is!" said the young man, glancing around him; but in his heart he thought the fair girl at his side was far more beautiful than any of her surroundings.

"How do you like our home by the banks of the Ohio?" asked Virginia.

"So well that I think the rest of my life will be spent in yonder settlement," replied Winthrop, quickly.

"Oh, I am so glad of that!" The tone of the girl showed that the words came directly from her heart. A warm flush came over the face of the young man as the words fell upon his ears.

"I am glad to hear you say that!" The earnest tone of Winthrop told the girl that her suspicion was truth. She was loved.

"You are?" murmured Virginia, in a low tone. She felt that the words that she wished to hear—for she loved the man that had risked his life so nobly—would soon be spoken.

"Yes, I am; can you guess why?" The voice of Winthrop trembled as he spoke.

Virginia glanced up shyly in the face of the young man, then dropped her eyes to the earth again. She did not answer.

Encouraged by her silence, Winthrop spoke: "Virginia, I have known you but a few days, but I feel as if I had known you all my life. I have never met any one in the world that I have liked as I do you—that I love as I do you; for, Virginia, I love you with all my whole heart."

Virginia hung her head; her glances shyly swept the ground. She did not reply.

"You are not offended at my words, Virginia?" he said, earnestly.

"No—no," she replied, slowly, looking up in his face with a half-smile.

Winthrop guessed the truth in the soft eyes that looked so lovingly into his own.

"Virginia, may I hope that some day you will learn to love me?" Winthrop asked, with eager hope patent in his voice.

Virginia Treveling was a truthful woman, and so she answered truthfully:

"No, not learn to love you, Harvey, for I do love you already!"

A moment more, and the head of the fair young girl was pillowed on the manly bosom of her lover.

Oh! the flood of joy that came over the young man when he discovered that the love that he wished so to gain was all his own. That the heart now beating so fondly against his breast was devoted to him, and to him alone.

"Virginia, you do love me, then?" he asked.

"Yes," she murmured, softly.

"You will be my wife?"

"Yes."

"You will be mine, then, forever and forever?"

The young man gently raised the little head that nestled so snugly on his breast. Virginia understood the movement, and anticipated the wish of her lover. With a shy smile upon her face, and a coy look in her hazel-brown eyes, she gave her lips up to her lover's caress.

The lips of the lovers met in a long, lingering kiss—the first proof of love, so dear to all hearts. Lip to lip and soul to soul.

Virginia Treveling gave herself to Harvey Winthrop.

A moment only the lovers remained in each other's arms.

Then the sharp crack of a rifle broke the stillness of the summer air.

With a groan of anguish Winthrop reeled from the fond embrace of the young girl. He clutched wildly at the air, and then fell heavily on his side upon the rocky surface.

With a shriek of terror Virginia knelt by the side of her lover.

The shriek of the young girl was answered by the shrill war-whoop of the Indian.

Forth from their covert in the thicket sprang two painted braves, and rushed with eager haste toward the young girl.

Virginia did not try to fly. Her senses were chilled to numbness by the fall of the man who but a moment before had pressed the warm love-kiss upon her willing lips.

Eagerly the two that came from the thicket seized the girl. With a moan of anguish she fell fainting into their arms.

The bird was in the net.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 190.)

Tradillo, the Corsair.

BY COLONEL PRENTISS INGRAHAM.

ONE pleasant day some years ago, I joined a party, bound on an expedition, or cruise, along the shores of Australia, where we intended seeking a haven now and then for the purpose of a hunt on shore.

We embarked in a good sailing schooner of a build closely resembling a yacht, and having been refitted to our taste, she made a most comfortable craft, fully capable of accommodating our crew of seven, and pleasure-seekers, who all told, numbered fifteen.

Over a smooth sea and aided by a five-knot breeze, we sailed merrily along for some twenty-four hours, and then put into a small bay and pitched our tents and commenced arrangements for a grand hunt.

The morning thus passed, and with great success, for game in abundance lay before our tents, and with eager appetites we were preparing to sit down to a substantial dinner, when word came to us from the schooner that a strange-looking vessel was hovering off the coast, and, it was supposed, was intending to come into our bay.

Instantly all was commotion, and anxiously we sought a spot from whence we could view the intruder, and discovered one of those peculiarly constructed, but swift-sailing vessels common in Chinese waters, and used formerly, and now it may be, for pirate craft by the Mandarins.

"Yonder vessel is certainly a pirate; and see, I am right, for yonder floats the flag of Tradillo, the Corsair."

The speaker was Lord Ingersoll Rowdon, and a gentleman whom we all knew had been a most extensive traveler over the world; for the past ten years he had spent visiting all parts of the Eastern land.

A thorough gentleman, seemingly fifty years of age, and generous and well-headed, though reserved and rather melancholy, Lord Rowdon was most popular, and between the Englishman and myself, particularly, there had sprung up a more than friendly regard.

"What would you advise then, my lord?" asked the schooner's captain.

"To remain where we are, finish our dinner, and then get aboard so that we can run out as soon as it is dark, for he evidently is not looking for us, but seeking a place to fill his water-casks."

The advice of Lord Rowdon was followed; we heartily enjoyed our woodland dinner, and soon after got aboard the schooner, which, sheltered by a wooded point of land, could not be seen from the corsair, who seemed intently watching for a place to come in.

A boat soon left the stranger's side, and after sounding for depth of water, returned, for it seemed unsatisfactory, and a moment after the corsair stood on a mile further down the coast, and entered cautiously into another and larger indentation, or bay.

It was now dark, and it took us but a very short while to get the schooner out into the open sea, and on her course.

"Gentlemen, I have a proposition to make, and it is that we render the country some service by being the means of taking this pirate," said Lord Rowdon, as we all stood upon the deck, closely watching the receding shores.

"And how can we?" I asked.

"I'll tell you. I have a brother, now on this station, and he commands, as you may know, H. B. M. ship R—, and in a few hours we can run down to where we can find him, and it will be an easy matter for his vessel to return and catch the pirate in his trap."

Very few of the party appeared to favor the idea of aiding in the capture of a Chinese pirate; for, well they knew the bloodthirsty character of the Mandarins, and the schooner at once away for the cruising-ground of the ship-of-war R—, with the intention of allowing those who so desired to join the nobleman and his brother in the attack, while the remainder continued on in the enjoyment of the pleasure-cruise.

About midnight we sighted the R—, received and answered her hail, and a few moments more found Lord Rowdon and myself, the only volunteer from the schooner, in the spacious and warlike cabin of one of the finest little vessels in her majesty's service.

Captain Vane Rowdon, the commander, received his brother warmly, and extended a cordial greeting to me. He listened to the object of our visit, and in ten minutes the R— was rapidly flying over the waters toward the spot where we had left the frigate.

But the sun rose ere we reached the little bay, and as its rays fell on the green background of the forest, we suddenly discovered the taper masts of the Chinaman sailing above the trees, and were delighted to see that he was still at anchor.

Mr. Morton, have all but one of the boats in readiness with their crews thoroughly armed," ordered Captain Rowdon; and then, turning to his brother and myself, he invited us to accompany him in his own cutter.

Taking the lead in the cutter, Lord Rowdon directed the way, and in a short while we rounded the same point of land which the schooner had, the day before, and in a moment came in sight of the little bay into which the frigate had crept.

Fifteen minutes more, and suddenly the quaint but formidable-looking craft came in full view, and at sight of us a great commotion was discernible upon the decks, for it was evident we had not before been discovered.

With three hearty English cheers the boats dashed on, and when within a little over a hundred yards from the Mandarin, a white flag was suddenly waved to us.

Rest on your oars, men. Brother, you speak the lingo; ask them if they surrender," said Captain Rowdon.

"What vessel is that?" hailed Lord Rowdon.

"The Sea Serpent," came the shrill reply.

"In the name of her British majesty I demand your surrender!" cried the Englishman.

"To what vessel?"

"The sloop-of-war R—, Captain Vane Rowdon, commander."

It was so long ere we received an answer that Lord Rowdon hailed again.

"The commander wishes you to come on board," was the reply.

We went the boats again, and the next moment we stood upon the decks, and were surprised at the scene that met our gaze, for hardly half a dozen seamen were visible, the guns were drawn in from the ports and lashed firmly, while the rigging and sails were in a tattered condition.

At the gangway a bright-looking Chinese youth, the same who had answered our hail, met us, and begged that the English commander would enter the cabin, and doing so, Captain Rowdon beckoned to his brother and myself to follow.

It was a large and gorgeously-furnished cabin, fitted with every convenience and luxury, yet a neglected and desolate air reigned there.

Upon a low divan near the stern ports was the figure of a man, and at a glance we saw he was severely wounded, for he breathed with difficulty, and upon a chair near by were a number of cloths, damp with blood.

As we entered he turned a face upon us, which I will never forget, so full was it of agony, remorse and supplication.

The light from the stern port fell upon him, displaying a form above the medium height, and of fine proportions, while the face, pale as death, was not that of a Chinese, but intelligent, bold and handsome, in spite of its pinched look of suffering.

The hair was brown, the mustache dark and wavy, and the eyes large and full of fire, but now lit up with a strange light as they fell upon Lord Rowdon and his brother.

"My God, Henri! Is it you?"

Such were the exclamations of the two Englishmen as their eyes sought the look of the wounded man.

"Yes, I, Henri Rowdon, your youngest brother, and Tradillo, the Corsair," bitterly said the Chinese.

"And you are our brother, too?" quickly said Lord Rowdon, as he knelt beside the wounded man and took his hand in his, while the captain stepped forward and raising the other hand, remarked:

"Yes, Henri, we will not cast you off, pirate though you be."

"Ever generous to me! How this now cuts me neither of you can feel; but it need not be known that your brother Henri, he who, years ago, was the pet of Rowdon castle, was Tradillo, for none know it now, and ere many hours I will be dead, for misfortune has followed me fast of late, ever since I had to run away from some Japanese cruisers and leave half of my men who were following ashore; then a Chinese man-of-war attacked me and I suffered severely in men and rigging, besides being wounded mortally myself, while upon this followed a storm that swept a dozen more of my crew into the ocean."

"Thus, in my despair, I put in here to die, and give my few remaining men a chance of escape."

Tradillo had spoken slowly and painfully, and the exertion proved too much for him, for from his side welled a great stream of blood, a few gaspings, a begging for forgiveness, and Henri Rowdon, the Chinese pirate, was dead.

In silent grief the brothers stood and gazed upon the noble form lying dead before them, and bitter indeed were their thoughts as they remembered how in his boyhood Henri had been the light of the house, for he was twenty years and more their junior, and the child of their parents' old age. They thought of his youth, his wild college days, his fast and dissipated life in London—all before he had grown to man's estate, and then fleeing from home with the brand of murder upon him, for in an evil hour he had shot down a policeman who would have arrested him while on a casual.

Then a blank came and nothing was heard of the wayward youth, and, as years went by, the family looked upon him as dead, but still his brother, Lord Rowdon, had sought him far and wide, and at length had found him—the leader of Chinese pirates!

It was a sad blow, and bitter indeed were the thoughts of the brothers as they stood there in silent meditation, and pitying their painful situation, I said:

"The world need not be the wiser gentlemen: so let your boats return to the ship, the Chinese here can make a coffin, and your brother can be buried yonder on the land."

With warm thanks my plan was acted upon, and dismissing all but a small guard, Captain Rowdon set the Chinese at work to bury their chief, and in a few hours a rude coffin was made, a grave dug upon a beautiful wooded point of land, and with his own flag thrown over the pier, all that was mortal of Henri Rowdon found a grave in a foreign land, while his vessel and crew captured by the R— were delivered up to the Chinese government, and to this day none excepting those concerned know the story of Tradillo the Corsair.

The Doomed Settler.

AN EPISODE OF THE KANSAS WAR.

BY JOSEPH E. BADGER, JR.

THE winter of 1855-6!

Long will it be remembered by the early settlers of Kansas. The "time that tried men's souls," renewed, and the days that earned for her the title of "BLEEDING KANSAS." To the early spring of the latter year do we now glance.

One of the most prominent citizens of L— was Carl Beneson, and also a leading member of the Free State party, whose outspoken sentiments and fearless denunciation of slavery had gained him many bitter enemies as well as warm friends.

Among the former was one especially vindictive and malicious in his words and actions, and who had sworn to kill Beneson at any cost. And those who knew him best said that he would keep his word, provided an opportunity was offered that did not entail too great a risk upon himself.

How Carl Beneson gained the deadly hatred of Eli Voss the following incident will show. While on a journey to Kansas City, Beneson heard cries and groans proceeding from a clump of trees at some little distance from the

trail, and thought he recognized the voice of one of his neighbor's sons, who belonged to the same party with himself.

Only pausing to draw his revolver, and see that the caps fitted close upon the nipples, Beneson rode to the *motte*, and, dismounting, rushed to the center, where a strange sight met his gaze.

Stripped to the skin, and suspended by a strong cord around his thumbs, so that his toes barely touched the ground, was a young lad, and, while one man vigorously piled a supple hickory with, two others stood by, in apparently huge glee at the sport. They were Eli Voss, his brother Abel, and a stranger to Beneson.

The Free Soiler, without hesitation, rushed forward, and with one well-delivered blow of his clenched fist, sent Eli Voss reeling to the ground, and then leveled his revolver with one hand at the other two scoundrels while he severed the cords that upheld young Brown. This done, he said, in a cool tone:

"Now, I don't want to waste good powder and lead upon such carrion as you are, but, by that good God, if you are still in sight when I have counted twenty, I'll save the hangman a job!"

And he began to count, in a clear, measured tone. Eli Voss arose to his feet and glared furiously at his assailant, but the grim muzzle of the polished tube stared him full in the eye, and he shrunk back, muttering:

"You hold the trump cards now, but the time will come when I'll have revenge for that blow; curse you!"

And ere the last number was counted, the cowardly trio had turned and fled through the woods, with a clear, taunting laugh ringing in their ears. This was the event—occurring in the fall of the year preceding the date of our sketch—that had gained Carl Beneson such an enemy, and is detailed for the better understanding of what follows.

As we said, it was in March, 1856, and as the shades of night settled down over the earth, Beneson and his wife were sitting together in the cosy dining-room; the little ones having just been sent to bed. Little did either of them dream of the fearful events that were so soon to transpire, or of the dread doom that was even then hanging over at least one of them.

As the hours passed on, Carl fell asleep upon the sofa, while his fair young wife was sewing beside the table, softly humming a song. It was a peaceful picture; but then the silence was broken.

A loud knocking at the hall door was heard, and Mrs. Beneson glanced quickly toward her husband. He was tired and worn out with his day's work, and slept on, unconscious of all outward sounds.

The wife half-rose, and then sunk back into her chair, trembling with a strange foreboding of coming ill, and with the blood chased from her cheeks. Why she felt thus she could not herself have told.

As the knocking was again resumed, after a momentary pause, and resounding impatiently through the hall, she gently called her husband, but then with a little laugh of ridicule at her own fears, and determining not to arouse Carl if possible, arose and went out to the door. In answer to her query as to who was there, the name of one of the neighbors was given, whose voice she fancied she knew, and she threw open the door.

But it was not the neighbor that sought admittance. It was Eli Voss upon his mission of vengeance.

Whether he mistook her for his enemy or no, is not known, but as the door opened he discharged a revolver full at her breast, and the unfortunate woman staggered back against the wall, uttering a piercing shriek of agony.

Another voice echoed back the cry, and as if recalled to life by the tones of her husband, and fearing for him, Mrs. Beneson rushed through the hall into the room, and fell senseless and bleeding at her husband's feet. He spring erect and grasped his trusty revolver, when he heard the voice of Eli Voss shouting:

"Follow me! boys; the cursed abolitionist is at home, and we must bag him now!"

With one glance at his motionless wife, Carl Beneson uttered a half-stifled howl of vengeance and dashed open the half-closed door. Confronting him he beheld the murderer, brandishing the still smoking pistol, and cheering on his comrades.

The words died in the man's throat as he beheld the husband, and he strove to dodge aside; but in vain. The settler's right arm straightened out, and as the pistol cracked a wild death-rattle mingled with the echoes. The murdered wife was avenged.

Ere the settler could fire again, the other ruffians were upon him. Despite his desperate struggles, Beneson was bound and dragged out into the open air.

"Quick! boys," cried Abel Voss, as he leaped upon his horse's back; "hand him up to me, and then break for the timber! We'll have a horse's nest about our ears in a minute!"

Beneson was quickly thrown across the saddle, and then the outlaws dashed with wild yells out from the little village and regained the woods in safety, although confused shouts and cries could now be heard behind them in the streets, and they well knew that but a few short minutes would elapse ere the avengers of blood would be upon their track.

But little recked they of that. Once in the dense and tangled forest, they knew that pursuit in the night time would be in vain, where the fugitives were as familiar with the country as they were. And as they rode along at seemingly reckless speed, their wild laughter and jeers rung out like the merriment of fiends.

For nearly an hour they rode onward, without pause, and the unfortunate Beneson was just beginning to recover his consciousness when the leader drew rein in a small glade, casting the bound and helpless form of the settler rudely to the ground. Abel Voss then spoke:

"Make haste, boys, and rig the rope, for we haven't much time to spare. Those infernal abolitionists will be on our track, hot foot, and if they should catch any of us, after this little job, poor Eli would have company upon his journey!" And he ended with a horrible curse.

Beneson now struggled to arise, still confused and bewildered, but Voss dealt him a brutal kick in the face that hurled him back again. The outlaws were busily preparing an impromptu gallows, and with an adroit celerity that spoke well for their fitness for the office of hangmen.

Then Beneson was rudely dragged under the rope swinging from the sturdy bough of a forest tree, and the noose was placed around his neck. He began to speak, but the outlaw leader, growing impatient and dreading lest his revenge should be frustrated by the pursuing settlers, gave the word, and poor Carl Beneson was quickly drawn up into the air, and the rope securely wound around a tree-trunk.

The moon looked down upon a fearful sight, as it sailed along through the light, fleecy clouds.

The quivering form of the doomed settler, the dark and forbidding shapes of the murderers, amidst the grand and gloomy trunks of the forest trees.

Then, as if to screen from view the dread tableau, a dense cloud covered the moon's face,

and all was dark below. When it passed, and the night queen shone once more, only one form was to be seen.

The form of the murdered settler, slowly swaying to and fro beneath the mournfully creaking bough.

The next day the body of Carl Beneson was found by his friends and afforded Christian burial, but it was many long weeks ere his wife learned the whole dread truth. But in time she recovered from her wound, and taking her fatherless children, returned to her relations, a broken-hearted woman; another victim of that demon—SLAVERY.

THE SATURDAY STAR JOURNAL

"Oh, go to, thunder!" cried Texas, rising in contempt. "See here, now; this has gone just about far enough. You may be able to play this on the niggers, but you can't on me. I'll give you just five minutes to get out of this shanty, or I'll just go in and clean out the whole lot of you, though I haven't got a weapon. I can stand a joke as well as most men, but this is a little too much for good nature."

The Ku Kluxers understood at once the mistake that the overseer was laboring under. He had taken the whole affair to be a practical joke.

"Ozark, show yourself," commanded the chief; "convince the stranger that we are in dead earnest."

The second one of the masked men removed the covering from his face and revealed the features of the outlaw.

Texas was astonished. He knew Ozark by reputation, and recognized him at once from the description given of him.

"I'm Yell Ozark, I am," growled the outlaw; "mebbe you've heard of me?"

"This is no joke; we mean business every time," cried the Ku Klux leader, sternly. "We give you twenty-four hours' warning to leave this place—this county. If you are found within the limits of Franklin after that time, may the Lord have mercy on your soul!"

"Why do you order me away?" Texas demanded, considerably mystified by these strange proceedings.

"That is our business," returned the masked man, sternly.

"I haven't trod on anybody's toes since I've been here that I'm aware of," Texas expostulated.

"Seek not to question, but obey," said the masked man.

"I'll see you in the bottomless pit first!" replied the overseer, with uncommon energy.

The masked men started in surprise.

"You refuse to go?" cried the Ku Klux leader, in a tone of menace.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

UNFORTUNATE MISS BUTTERFLY.

MISSOURI, extended upon her bed with her face buried in the pillow, sobbing as if her heart would break, heard the sound of Sam's horse's hoofs as he galloped up and then rode away again; then she heard the overseer descend the creaking steps and the low rumble of the wagon as it passed by the house on its way to the storehouse.

It was probably a quarter of an hour, at least, before Missouri recovered her composure. Then she rose from the bed, lighted a candle and sat down by the window to meditate.

Long and thoughtfully she reflected upon what had passed between her and the overseer.

"I suppose that I acted like a silly child, and that he won't have the best opinion in the world of me," she murmured; "but I couldn't help it. I knew that he was making believe, and I couldn't have helped telling him I knew it, if I had died for it."

Then she looked out of the window over the fields toward the storehouse, as if she expected that her eyes would pierce alike the gloom of the night and the wall of the log-cabin, and so reveal to her sight the form of the overseer.

Five or ten minutes she had sat in deep meditation by the window, when she heard a low scratching on the door. That was Butterfly's knock, and a moment after the door opened and the young negro girl came in, looking frightened half to death.

"What's the matter, Butterfly? Your eyes are as big as saucers."

"Oh, bress de Lord, missy, dey's come!" exclaimed the girl, sinking on her knees in an agony of terror.

Missouri rose from her seat in wonder. She saw at once that something very unusual must have occurred to produce such a state of terror, for Butterfly was quite courageous by nature.

"What's the matter, Butterfly? Can't you tell me—what has come?"

"Oh, we's all gwine to be killed!" and then the girl commenced to rock herself to and fro and to howl dismally.

"Stop your crying at once, Butterfly!" exclaimed Missouri, firmly but kindly. "Tell me what you have seen. Is it something on the stairs or in your room?"

"Oh, no, missy," the girl sobbed. "Oh, fore de Lord, save us poor sinners! Dey's out dar, missy," and then the girl pointed through the open window toward the stables and storehouse.

Missouri's heart gave a great leap and for a moment she felt a choking sensation in her throat.

She darted at the girl and seizing her by the shoulder, raised her bodily from the floor.

"Tell me instantly what you have seen and where!" she exclaimed, excitedly, and in her nervous agitation, she gave the unfortunate Butterfly a good shaking which had the effect of bringing her partially to her senses.

"Dey's all out dere by de store-house an' in de store-house wid Massa Texas. I was comin' from ainty Dinah's house an' I see'd 'em wid my own two lookin' eyes!" the girl howled.

"Saw who?" exclaimed Missouri, almost in despair of ever getting any information from the terrified girl.

"Dem debils wid black t'ings, dat rides nights for to eat poor niggers!" cried Butterfly.

"The Ku Klux!"

Missouri started back in horror, weak as a child, and Butterfly went down on the floor, all in a heap, with a most dismal howl.

The girl was well aware of the terrible nature of the generality of the visits of the masked men, and her heart trembled for the overseer.

"Was any one else there?" she demanded, with a great effort stilling her agitation.

"No, missy; dere was a hundred of 'em went into de house arter Massa Texas, an' one on dem stayed outside," the negro said, between her howls of terror.

Missouri understood at once that this statement was a little exaggerated.

The girl pressed her hand upon her heart as though by that act she would calm its tumultuous throbbings.

"Oh, Heaven give me strength in this my hour of need!" she murmured. Wildly the thoughts flashed through her brain, desperately she essayed to think of some plan to rescue the overseer from the terrible danger which threatened him.

Her first impulse was to send for the field hands to go to the assistance of Texas, but instantly rejected the idea, as she thought of the terror these midnight riders inspired among the superstitious blacks.

Then she thought of Sam; she knew that he had served in the Union army, and having snuff powder on the field of battle, would not be so apt to give way to the Ku Klux fear.

"Butterfly, will you go over to the stable and tell Sam that I want him?" she said.

"Deed, missy, I don't dar fur to stir out of de house," the negro moaned.

"Why not?" demanded Missouri, impatiently.

"Ise afeard of dem black debils!" and then Butterfly commenced to howl again.

"Stop your noise!" cried Missouri, imperiously; "you goose! they are not at the stable, but back at the store-house."

"Deed, missy, dey's all ober. Ef I was to gwine out to de stable, I'd be a dead nigger, sure, boo-hoo!" and the girl howled again.

"I'll go myself!"

Then to Missouri's mind came the thought that, while superintending the arranging of the overseer's room that morning, she had seen his revolvers lying in the top drawer of the bureau.

"Oh, Heaven!" she murmured; "he is unarmed and in their hands!" Then a sudden idea came into her head. "With the revolvers, Sam and I might be able to frighten them away."

Seizing the candle, she advanced to the door.

Butterfly jumped to her feet in grotesque alarm.

"Oh, whar is you gwine, missy?" she faltered.

"To get Sam and try to rescue the overseer!" promptly answered the planter's daughter.

"Take me wid you, missy!" Butterfly howled; "dem black debils will come an' git me if I stay here alone." And she trembled as if stricken with the ague.

"You'll cry out and make a noise!" asserted her mistress.

"Deed I won't, missy. I'll be jes' as still as deff," the negroess replied, earnestly.

"Come, then; but remember if you make a noise I shall let them take you!"

Missouri had reflected that, though Butterfly could not be counted upon to take an active part in the rescue, yet she could howl enough for a dozen and therefore would be a valuable acquisition, as the masked men would imagine that they were assailed by a whole regiment of blacks upon hearing her cries.

Missouri proceeded at once to the overseer's room. As she had expected, the two revolvers were in the drawer. Securing them she perceived that every chamber was loaded.

Then, followed by Butterfly, who was trembling in every limb with terror, and therefore kept close to the heels of her mistress, Missouri went at once to the stable.

As usual, Sam had a choice collection of familiar spirits with him.

Missouri called him out and briefly explained the situation to him.

Sam's military ardor was inflamed in a minute.

"By golly, I ain't afeard of dem rascals!" he exclaimed. "I fit 'em when I was in de army, an' they can't scree me 'kase dey's got dar faces kivered up. I've got my musket inside an' dar's five or six good boys in dar fur to help us; dey kin yell, if dey can't fight. I jes' tell 'em dat dere's some chicken-thieves down 'round de storehouse, an' I won't say nuffin' 'bout dem black riders, 'kase dat will skeer 'em. You see, missy, dey ain't fit fur Uncle Sam, like I have."

Then Sam went inside, got his musket and assembled his followers.

Five minutes after the "army" was on its way to rescue the overseer.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

AN EASY VICTORY.

"REFUSE TO GO!" exclaimed Texas, repeating the words of the masked man; "of course I refuse! I don't acknowledge your right to order me away. What have I done to you or to any of the people of this country? You ought to consider me a good Southern-rights man, for I have whistled a sassy nigger like thunder since I've been here."

A hoarse growl of rage came from the gigantic figure in black, who held the rope, at this announcement.

"The Ku Klux Klan do not give their reasons," said the leader of the band, sternly. "Enough that you have been marked for death by the mystic brotherhood of the South, unless you instantly quit this place. The Grand Cyclops has spoken; the single eye is upon you and you must obey the command."

"Brotherhood of the South!" exclaimed the overseer, in contempt. "That's a lie! You're a set of scallywags; the whole lot of you; a band of mean, cowardly cut-throats that take advantage of the darkness and a disguise to satisfy private and personal grudges. No true man, north or south, will hide his face behind a mask and stab his enemy without giving him a chance for his life. You're a cowardly set of miserable, sneaking cowards! Fire and be hanged to you! You've got arms and are four to one, but if you don't kill me first fire, I'll strangle one or two of you before I get through."

Weaponless and alone, but with every muscle in his frame swelling with indignation, The Man-from-Texas defied the Ku Klux band.

The cowardly assault had wrought him to such a pitch of rage that death had no terrors for him.

At this critical period, when the revolvers of the masked ruffians were about to lodge their leaden contents into the body of the reckless overseer, clear and shrill a woman's voice sounded on the air.

Here they are, father, in the store-house.

Then followed the hoarse voice of the violent Sam.

"Furst company forward by de flank; second battalion take 'em in de rear! Ready—fire!"

Then came a scattering volley of shots, followed by a yell that rung in the ears of the masked men like the knell of impending doom.

The unceremonious way in which the Ku Klux band left that store-house and got upon their horses and flew, fully proved that retreating was their "best holt"—to use the "Westernism."

The raising of the siege was performed so quickly that even the overseer was taken by surprise.

Another yell, more powerful than the first, came from the lips of Sam and his "army" as they beheld the sudden flight of the Black Riders.

And as for the members of the Ku Klux band, they were firmly convinced that old General Smith had armed all the negroes on the plantation and had planned a deliberate attack for the purpose of capturing the whole party.

"You infernal fools!" growled the leader of the band—who was no other than Will Fayette—enraged that he had yielded to sudden fear and allowed himself to be carried away by the headlong rush of the rest; "why didn't you stand? It was only Smith and the negroes, and they won't fight."

"They'll fight like blue blazes, sometimes," exclaimed Ozark, in reply; "don't you remember the fight at Jenkins' Ferry, or the battle of the Saline, as the Yanks call it? The nigs fought like devils ther. Fagan or Kirby Smith can tell you all 'bout that. Ef it hadn't been for the thrashin' that we got ther, we would have taken Little Rock an' de hull of Steele's army."

"Gentlemen, I protest against this Ku Klux business!" exclaimed another of the riders in a trembling voice. "We might have been all killed by these ignorant blacks!" The speaker was Job Foxcroft.

And as the party rode on, they indulged in

mutual recrimination as to who had been the first to run, and finally all united in blaming the sentinel for allowing himself to be surprised; and that worthy—one of the vagabonds of the "leading" who had been seduced into the affair by the gift of a bottle of whisky—protested that the "hull darned army" had crept up under the shelter of a worm fence, and that the "furst thing" he knew of the attack was when they opened fire.

One thing was certain, though: the Ku Klux expedition was chiefly distinguished by its complete failure.

After the abrupt and ignominious flight of the masked men, the rescuing army advanced to the store-house, at the door of which the overseer appeared.

"We's done beat 'em!" Sam exclaimed, in triumph, waving his musket wildly in the air. "By golly, how dey run! You couldn't see de hosses, fur de dust dey raised!"

A loud laugh went up from the blacks at this remark. They were wild with triumph at having put to flight the terrible Ku Klux riders, although it is safe to remark that, had the boasting darkies been aware of the character of the foe they had advanced to attack so boldly, not two out of the number would have stirred a single step from the barn.

Missouri had only waited to catch sight of the overseer, and to assure herself that he was unhurt; she had taken advantage of the darkness to return to the house.

But Sam related to the overseer the part that the girl had in his rescue, and Texas was fully conscious that to her he probably owed his life.

The overseer looked up the store-room and returned to the house, while the blacks went to their quarters to boast of their mighty deeds, and by the time they got there, the attack on the Ku Klux band and their sudden flight, had lengthened into a desperate hand-to-hand battle of at least a quarter of an hour, during which each individual darkey had performed wonderful deeds of valor.

About half-past ten General Smith got home, and was very much astonished at hearing of the Ku Klux's visit and warning, and was utterly unable to assign a reason for their hostility to the overseer.

Texas, though, had reflected over the matter, and an idea had come to him. If, in some mysterious way, the object of his visit to Smithville had become known to the man who had killed his father, that person would have a very excellent reason to wish to force him to leave.

The mysterious warning coupled with the strange disappearance of the contents of the tin box, all tended to convince him that the assassin was still in the village, and from his being able to control the masked men, was evidently a man of some note.

Texas felt certain of two things.

The man who had started the Ku Klux band after him, and the man who had stolen the paper left by his slain father, was one and the same, and that man was the one that he was in search of.

The General and Texas had resumed their former seats on the piazza to talk the Ku Klux attack over, and after they had duly discussed that topic, the General abruptly turned the conversation to his visit to old Fayette, the banker.

"What do you suppose he said, Mr. Texas, when I asked him if it was possible for him to extend the mortgage, after telling him frankly just how I stood?"

"I haven't the least idea, sir."

"Well, he talked—as men generally do when asked for a favor of that kind—of how scarce money was, and how he had depended upon the sum due from me to meet certain things with, and that he didn't really see how he was going to get on without it, but—now mind, Mr. Texas, this was said with extreme regard to my feelings. No bargain and sale about it. As a man of business, obliged to meet certain payments at certain times, he must enforce the agreement entered into between us; but, as a Southern gentleman and a neighbor, yielding to his sympathies, and wishing to see his son settled in life, he was perfectly willing to make any pecuniary sacrifice in his power."

A grave look settled upon the face of the overseer as he listened to the recital.

"A fair offer it seems to me," he said, slowly. "Yes, it depends upon Missouri now. I shall see her to-morrow. Goodnight."

The two then retired. The overseer did not go to sleep for quite a long time.

(To be continued—commenced in No. 181.)

The Stolen Mustang.

BY MARK WILTON.

"WHEN I first settled in Texas," said old Jack Frazier, one evening, when several of his number had reminded the veteran borderer that it was his turn at story-telling, "things were in a rather unsettled state. Not that they have become wholly settled now—that ain't what I'm going to tell about, but how things were then."

"Wal, heaven above, old hoss, an' never mind the 'explanatory notes by the author,'" said Billy Gray.

"Keep shady there, sonny, or I'll make a special procession hyer, right away!" growled old Jack.

"Don't interrupt, Billy!" said Captain Ned, authoritatively, for he knew old Frazier's anger would soon make him forget his story if it was not quieted.

"As I was a-saying, things were rather out of joint; or, to come to the pint at once, a man's life and property wa'n't worth shucks in that region unless he stood up like a man for both on 'em."

"When I settled down on the big ranch I had bought of a certain Senor Montroy for a mere song, I did so knowing perfectly well the unsettled state of the kentry, and without a single shake in my boots. For several boyces, my experience as a sailor, in every foreign wars, and a couple of years in Arabia, had given me a purty fair idee of what hard times were."

"So ye see I settled in Texas without taking the least bit of awe for its lawless citizens along with me; for the majority of the disturbers were Mexicans, an' what is a Mexican anyway but a low, sneaking, cowardly hoss-thief?"

"Wal, when the senior feller he left all his sarvants at the ranch, an' so all I had to do was to say to the overseer, who was an honest, well-meaning varmint, if he was a Mexican and a coward—old I had to do was to say to him: 'Go right on just as you've been doing; you know how to run this 'ere shebang a mighty

sight better'n I do.' An' so he did, and finding him a fairly intelligent varmint, I jest let him manage the hull thing, while I contented myself with hauling in the valler boys."

"But one day, arter I'd been there goin' on two year, I made a trade for myself. One day a Comanche redskin kin along on a half-tamed mustang, which he had caught on the prairie, and havin' bred a fancy taste for horse-flesh while on the Arabian deserts, I at once took a fancy to her and bought her, payin' a good big price for her, too."

"But I never regretted it, boyces, for with a little judicious trainin' she developed into an almighty speedy varmint. Ah! how I loved her; and how she loved me! With a little trainin' she became as gentle as a kitten, and as obedient as a dog."

"She had been on the plantation nigh onto a year, when one mornin' I woke up to find her gone, an' signs around in the vicinity to show that a band of mounted men had passed and taken her with them."

"Lord, boyces, you orter seed me then! I rally bieve I scart my Mexican sarvants out of a year's growth a-swearin' an' howlin' an' stormin'. I cussed them, an' myself, an' every thing an' everybody; but ended by orderin' them to mount and foller me in pursuit of the thieves. Bah! you orter seed them then! The mere idee made them turn pale; so, saddlin' the best hoss I had left—the hoss-thieves hadn't taken any but Princess, for reasons which I arterwards learned—I rode away in pursuit of them all alone."

"The trail led away, broad and plain toward the north-west for twenty miles, when it began to gradually wind around toward the south-west until that became its regular course. I made out that there was about twenty-eight or thirty hosses in the crowd, nearly all shod, which showed me that the riders were not Indians, unless they had been stealing hosses on the wholesale, an' this of course was not their regular business, or they would have taken all of mine. So I decided that they must be Mexicans."

"Wal, I follered them all that day, and the next mornin' found their night's camping-place, not ten miles from where I had stopped to rest and snooze."

"Arter follerin' a short distance fuder, the trail divided—a half-dozen hosses havin' gone north-west, and the remainder continer on in the previous cou'se. Of course this did not perplex me at all, for I knowed Princess' track right well, and soon made out that she had been taken with the smaller party."

"I had now no doubt of the final end of my enterprise, for I considered myself good for six men in my present state of mind, whether they were white, red or striped."

"So, with a whoop away I went, urging my gallant steed forward at its utmost speed. He was a large-framed, homely beast, was Black Dan, but he was swift for all of that, and as endurin' as a flint-stone."

"The trail growed fresher as I perceeded, and a little after noon I discovered a thin arm of smoke arising from a timber-belt not far ahead. I did not car' about ridin' within rifle-shot of the unknown campers, so, keepin' Kill-buck ready for use, I rode around one end of the belt, hopin' to git a better view on t'other side."

"I wasn't disappointed. The prairie made a bend inter the timber at one p'int, like a half-moon, an' in this little spot five men were encamped. They were lounging around in various positions, and were all of the same stamp; small, slovenly-looking Mexicans, in gaudy but soiled clothes. They were armed to the teeth, and this circumstance, together with some others, confirmed me in my former belief that they were prairie-pirates."

"One thing was certain: they were either ignorant of the ways of the prairie, or else were rather reckless; for not only had they built a fire out of green wood, but had let me approach quite nigh to them without seein' me."

"But what interested me the most was the sight of my lost mustang that was quietly feeding with the other hosses of the marauders. As I wa'n't in yumar fur foolin', I jest give a peculiar whistle which brung up Princess' head in a shake; the noble critter knowin' her master's signal right well."

"The Greasers did not mind the whistle; but an instant later when my hoss set off on a dead gallop, they pricked up their ears summut, you kin bet, and tried to oull her back. They might as well have tried to stop the wind. Princess knew her old master was 'round, and nothin' but an ounce o' cold lead could have kept her from joinin' him."

"The pirates had no idee o' losin' thar stolen mustang, so leapin' to their saddles, they swept down in pursuit o' her. But afore they had rode two rods I was astride Princess' back, and with Black Dan at my side, was speeding away out o' their reach."

"Tow the fellers stormed, an' cussed, an' threatened! They might have saved their breath—threats never had much effect on old Jack Frazier."

"Ef I had ben alone with Princess I could soon have rode away from them, but Black Dan had ben rode long and hard, and was rather blowed; besides, there were some splendid hosses in the gang ahind us, and we could not gain an inch. Bullets began to drop around me, too, just near enough to be dangerous, so I saw I had got to give them fellers a lesson afore they would let me alone."

"So drawin' Kill-buck to my shoulder I blazed away, not aimin' at any one in particular, but at the whole group, and as I did, would have it put a ball into the foremost hoss's head."

"This left me but four pursuers, but they were so hot after me, and peppered me so freely, woundin' me once in the arm, that I got out o' patience and fired again, droppin' a man; but this did me no good, for the feller I had dismounted afore was soon mounted on the hoss and him cavortin' along in the rear."

"Wal, to make a long story short, we kept up a runnin' fight for several mile, and then the two remainin' Greasers turned tail and rode off. Just fur the fun of the thing I charged arter them, an' away they went like cowardly yolves and that was the last I ever saw of them."

"Of the three fellers whom I had dropped from their hosses, two were stone dead, while the other was fast follerin' them. Afore he died he made a clear breast o' the affair, and I learned the follerin' particulars:

"They were all members o' a so-called 'Red Roger's' band of prairie-pirates, and this 'Red Roger' havin' a spite agin' a Greaser village was then on his way to destroy it. Knowin' he would have to jest git up an' dust when the massacre was over he had wanted the very best hosses he could git; this was the reason he had stole my swift mustang an' left my other hosses."

"Wal, the Greaser soon died, and then leavin' his carcass and that of his comrades for the wolves, I turned tail an' rode homeward. Arter this I took good care o' my mustang you kin bet, an' she wa'n't sole agin'."

"And 'Red Roger'—what of him?" asked Jeb Washburne.

"Wal, it seems that one o' his band turned traitor an' peached, an' so instead o' surprisin' the Greaser town, he was himself surprised and killed, an' his men scattered forever."

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A FASHIONABLE GIRL'S LOVE-LETTER.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

Your face from my fond vision can not pass,
Tis e'er before me like the looking-glass.
If I could ever cease in you to trust,
My hopes would trail like my dress in the dust.
My thoughts of you, which tongue can never speak,
Deepen the rouge upon my conscious cheek.
The fear that you might cease to think me fair
Does pain me like these garters which I wear.
And when at night I rest me from my cares,
I think of you, though I forget my prayers.
And when your voice upon my spirit steals,
It seems quite lifted up upon high heels.
'Twould startle me to hear your love had ranged,
As much as 'twould to hear the styles had changed.
Yea, if another maiden pleased your sight,
My cheek would show an extra lily-white.
How sweet it is to hear you tell your love,
And squeeze my hand just like this narrow glove!
I wait as fondly for your coming, dear,
As for the newest fashions to appear.
My tender love for you will alter not,
And will not fade like the last dress I bought.
My heart, in spite of narrow corsets, grows
Fonder of you as every moment goes.
I'll never forget you till the day I die,
And you are the only beau I'd like to tie.
And if you wish me, love, to be your bride,
I must begin my colors to decide.
Whether pale blue, with drounces, trimmed with
flowers,
Or simple white, would suit a love like ours.
But anyway I'll trust in you, dear sir,
As fondly as I'd trust my milliner.
And so good-night, sweet dreams, I'll dream of you,
And that nice suit I saw at Stewart's too.

DICK DARLING,
The Pony Express-Rider.
A CALIFORNIA STORY.

BY LAUNCE POYNTZ.

III.

"Now, Marse Dick," said Tom Nelson, as the mail-carrier and he sat at opposite sides of a little fire, in the Twelfth Infantry camp, a night or two after the murder of General Canby; "dis yer war ain't gwine to be got over so quick as dem folkses in Yreka t'inks. It's berry well fo' General Gillem to gib big order, 'sterminate ebbery cussed Modoc,' but 'tain't so easy to do de stermineating dem fellers, Marse Dick. Now why for should you and I be loafin' round here, when we mout be out wid Missy Charlotte at Fairfields, whar we is allers welcome, you know, Marse Dick. De season is gwine, and de corn and taters is not in, and dough fit-in's mighty pooty work fo' leetle time, it get mighty tiresome to dis nigger."

Dick Darling laughed.
"If you're tired, you can go home, Tom. For my part, I volunteered to carry the mails during this business, and I don't intend to give up, till Captain Jack and all his pals are ironed in pairs."

"But den, what Missy Charlotte do?" asked Tom, shrewdly. He knew the right road to influence Darling. The young mail-carrier's face changed.

"What of her?" he asked. "I must do my duty without regard to her, and perform my agreement with the Government."

"But Missy Charlotte she send word by me, she want see Marse Dick, berry partickler," said Tom, stoufly.

"Did she say that?" asked Dick, eagerly.
"Yes, Marse Dick," replied the darky, unblushingly; "which was a tremendous lie on his part, and he knew it. But Tom was too anxious to get home, to hesitate at a falsehood, more or less, if it only secured his end."

The young mail-carrier mused a few minutes.
"Tom, I must certainly go see her," he said, in a low voice, "if I have to get leave."

"No need of dat, Marse Dick," said Tom, shrewdly. "No need let ebberybody in camp know your business. You an me is gwine to Yreka to-morrow. Let's go round by Fairfield's ranch, an' pay our respect."

"A good idea, Tom. We'll do it. Time to go to sleep. Good-night."

When the first faint streaks of dawn were brightening in the east, Dick Darling and Tom Nelson were in the saddle, and riding slowly and cautiously out of the Lava Beds. So broken was the country, and so favorable for ambushes, that the young mail-carrier was compelled to take a different route every day, to escape assassination.

In the faint, dubious light, they struck down a narrow canon, which led them out on the plain in safety, just as the light became plain.

Dick Darling breathed freer when he came out on the open prairie. Bold as he was, there was something in the nature of the Modoc war, so horrible and bloodthirsty, something so goomly and repulsive in those black Lava Beds, that it weighed upon the youth's senses like a nightmare.

"Come along, Tom," he cried, when they were at last on the prairie; "if we expect to reach Yreka by way of Fairfield's ranch, we'll have to stir round pretty lively."

And the two comrades, white and black, stretched rapidly off to the westward, in the direction of Fairfield's ranch. Not a sign of a Modoc was to be seen, and in three hours from the time they left camp, the huge live-oak that sheltered the gate of the ranch appeared in sight.

The bound Hector accompanied them; for since that faithful creature had twice saved his master's life, by giving intelligence of approaching danger, Darling had consented to Tom's taking him along. Now, suddenly, the dog gave a furious bay, and darted forward toward the ranch at such lightning speed that he left the riders far behind.

"Marse Dick, dar's an Injun sneakin' round de ranch," said Tom, eagerly. "I knows dat dog's ways. Let's ride like sixty."

And away went the comrades toward the ranch at full gallop, following the dog, who ran straight as an arrow toward the great live-oak tree that grew near the ranch gate, baying loudly all the time.

Then they heard a great disturbance in the ranch, and out came old Fairfield, rifle in hand, roused by the dog. They saw him raise his rifle to his shoulder; and then, like a flash, out darted an Indian on foot from under the great tree, and ran like a deer across the prairie toward a clump of cottonwood a little way off. But that Indian was not destined to escape. The old agent leveled his rifle with cool deliberation, and they saw a little puff of white smoke. The savage threw up his arms and fell dead with a shriek, just as the two daughters of Fairfield came running out of the gate, each bearing a rifle, in the style of true border heroines.

As the comrades galloped up, there was a scream of joyful recognition, and then Dick Darling was off his horse, and Charlotte Fairfield was in his arms. Tom Nelson rode round the ranch in company with old Fairfield to ascertain if any more Indians were concealed

near by, but none were found. The old rancher returned on foot to the gate, while Tom took a wider circuit through the prairie on the look-out for sign of any kind. The slain Indian proved to be a Klamath, as they supposed, and the fact made Tom very uneasy, as it showed that the Klamaths must be growing bold from the impunity of the Modocs.

When he came back toward the tree, he felt sober and thoughtful, but the sight he beheld there was enough to cheer up a hermit in Lent. Charlotte and Dick were standing under the great live-oak with their hands clasped in each other's, while the girl appeared to be earnestly warning Dick not to expose himself to peril for her sake. But Tom started with surprise as he looked to the rear of the lovers; for there stood Sophy Fairfield, regarding them both with a gloomy, lowering brow.

Her father stood near her, watching them with grave approbation, and not seeing the expression of his youngest daughter's face. But Tom did; and the shrewd darky understood the situation at a glance.

"Golly, dat light-haired gal as jealous of de dark one as she can be," he muttered. "Dey've both been pullin' caps for Marse Dick, and de dark one's got him. Golly, but I see glad 'tain't my gal she's a-glowerin' at. She look as if she like to pisen her."

Here Dick called to him, laughingly:
"Tom, you've been lying to me, you rascal. You said that Miss Charlotte wanted to see me—"

"An' I guess as how she did, boss," was the grinning reply; "leastwise it look uncommon like it jess now. I nebber tells no lie, Marse Dick."

"But you told me she gave you a message, and she never did."
"Well, well, Dick, we might as well forgive him," said Charlotte, smiling; "for he brought you to me when I least expected you, and brought Hector, too, the good old dog, who saved us all from being murdered perhaps, for that Indian must have been only a spy from a larger body."

"And I see t'inkin', Missy Charlotte," said Tom, gravely, "dat we'll have to be gettin' out of dis hyar ef dem fellers is round, or we won't

Strange Stories.

THE FEATHERED VEST.

A NORWEGIAN LEGEND.

BY AGILE PENNE.

THE galley of golden-haired Morna, widow of great Red Rollo, lord alike of sea and land, was on the stormy waste of waters.

The angry waves were tossing up and down; the spirits of the blast rode on the bosom of the tempest, and in loud discordant notes they sang the knell of the Norwegian queen.

"Save me, oh, Heaven!" moaned the helpless woman, as she knelt upon the galley's deck and lifted her streaming eyes to the angry clouds above, but the whistle of the wind and the splash of the sea were the only answer to her prayer.

Then through the leadlike clouds and the screaming gale a huge raven winged his flight. At a single glance the Norway queen recognized the ill-omened bird. It was the spirit of the ancient war-god, that in the olden time had fluttered his wings over the battle-field when the fierce northern warriors had carried dismay and death to the southern lands;

"And France's Knights, forward and bold,
Rough Rollo's ravens croaked them cold."

Upon the mast of the little galley the raven perched. He folded his wings and glared with his piercing eyes upon the helpless woman beneath.

"Oh, fair dame," the raven cried, "thy Christian saints can not save thee now. The merman clings to the keel of thy vessel, and the misty caverns of the deep raise high the spell that vexes the waves and rouses the demons of the blast. Thy husband, bold Red Rollo, prayed to me when on the seas his bark felt the tempest's power, and my might brought him safe again to land."

"And wilt thou not save me?" the unhappy queen questioned, in her dire extremity.

"On one condition," quoth the raven, fluttering his sable wings.
"And the condition?"

And when the long vigil was over, and the anxious mother prayed to know the doom foretold by the planets above, the monk made answer slow and solemn:

"No harm can the raven do to the Norway prince either on sea or land."
Then beat the mother's heart with joy, for she knew that by the aid of the sage monk she had learned the truth.

"If the raven was powerless for evil on both rolling water and solid land, where else then could he harm the heir to Norway's throne?" she cried in glee.

Years passed; young Sir John grew to man's estate, the very image of his father, the famous Norwegian warrior. The sable wings of the raven flapped not over the towers of the palace, and the queen had long since ceased to trouble her mind with thoughts of the obscure bird. She trusted that the foolish promise would never be fulfilled.

When Sir John was one-and-twenty, a fierce storm drove on the Norway coast the vessel wherein was embarked beauteous Edith, daughter of Scotland's king.

The Norway queen gave fitting receptions to the fair maiden, and in her old palace harbored her, while her train upon the shore repaired the damaged vessel.

Thrown thus into close communion, was it any wonder that the Norway prince soon learned to love the Scottish maiden, or that she returned his passion?

The ship was finished, and gentle Edith sailed away, bearing Sir John's pledge that within a year and a day he would follow her to Scotland and claim her from her royal father.

But scarcely three months went by before the young prince decided that a year was far too long to wait. He must to Scotland at once, and claim his bride.

The queen listened to his prayer, and then as she granted it in her heart came a warning of danger. She thought of the raven, and the promise that she had given years before. To the young prince she related the story, and warned him to beware of the raven's power. But he, young, brave and heedless, laughed and asked, if not on sea or land, where then could danger find him?

"CUPID'S REPLY."

BY FRANK M. LEMIRE.

From the aisles of summer brightness
I have come to answer thee;
There, I heard thy gentle questioning
Blend with choicest minstrelsy.
I will tell thee where thou'lt find her—
Thy pure, poet-soul's ideal—
Not in realms of glamour'd fancy;
But in living, blissful rest.
Seek the mourner's saddened chamber—
Seek the weary couch of pain;
There, like gentlest breath of incense,
Thou wilt hear her dear, loved name.
Dost thou wonder how thou'lt know her?—
By the love-light in her eye!
By the rosy tide that flushes
Cheek and brow when thou art nigh!
By the drooping blue-veined eyelids;
The wee, soft trembling hand;
The perfect form, whose wakened pulses,
Thrill 'neath love's encircling band!
She must own the master-power
Of a love so fond and true;
She will listen to thy pleading
If thou wilt with courage woo.
She will yield her lips, all trembling,
And her form, to thy embrace,
If thou wilt all truly give her
In thy fond, true heart a place.
But the years may hasten on,
For that love can ne'er grow cold;
It will bring you purest treasures—
Wealth, no poet's pen hath told.

Rod and Rifle.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "IN THIS WILDERNESS."

VIII.—THE NIGHT HUNT.

VERY little was said as we wrapped ourselves in our blankets and lay down to rest upon our beds of balsam-boughs, upon our return from the chase after the Phantom Hunters.

After tossing on my uneasy couch for two hours, I rose, slipped on my clothing, and went outside to smoke, but I had scarcely settled myself on a log when out came Dan, looking frowzy and tired, filling his pipe as he came.

He lit up, and we blew a noisome cloud, and as the feathery wreaths ascended, a vision of Harry Viator, in light attire, dawned upon our astonished vision.

"It's no sort of use, boys," he said; "I can't sleep with this thing on my mind. Let's go somewhere; what do you say?"

"I'm agreeable to any thing," said Dan. "I can't stand this."

At this moment Old Ben thrust his head out of the hut, a broad grin on his face.

"I thort like enuff you wouldn't sleep good, boys," he said. "Come out, Ben; we'll try this thing over."

Why do you go now, if you would not hunt after we met that— I don't know what to call it," said Dan.

"Call it a sperrit, and you'll be most mighty right," replied Old Ben. "I'll go now, 'cause I know that of a party goes back to camp an' starts fresh arter they've met the Phantom Hunters, they allus have good luck."

We accepted the situation, and ten minutes later we were again floating over the bosom of the lake. We separated, and our boat took the south shore, leaving Harry and Ben to travel over the dangerous spot upon which the Phantom lurked. I don't pretend to be easily frightened, but I did not want any thing more to do with phantoms that night. We glided on past the wooded points, when the speed of the light craft was checked suddenly and the light gleamed upon the point. There, in the tunnel of white light thrown by the pitch-pine, I saw the two gleaming sparks which I knew were the eyes of the deer.

Young Ben make a signal which we understood, and both weapons were lifted. He had no confidence in us singly, but thought that firing together and using buckshot we might hit something.

"Steady!"

The word was hardly heard on the passing breeze, so light was the whisper. The boat glided slowly toward the bank, and at the signal we fired together. There was a floundering upon the bank and a heavy fall, and young Ben dashed his paddle through the water with the might of a giant; the light craft rushed with a crash into the reeds which lined the banks, and Dan jumped out with his knife and rushed on before we could stop him.

A moment later I saw the long legs of Dan Harvey flourishing in the air, as he went, head over heels, down the bank, propelled by the branching antlers of the buck we had shot, which was not dead by any means. Dan went splashing into the water, and the buck, standing for a moment in an attitude of proud defiance, fully revealed in the light of the blazing jack, met his doom at the hands of the young guide. I saw his rifle come to a level with a quick but steady motion, his knee was flashed for an instant through the double sights, and, bounding upright in agony, the buck plunged into the water.

Dan crawled out of the water as Ben caught the buck by the antlers and drew his knife across its throat. Then, hanging it on a branch out of reach, we invited Dan to take his place in the boat.

Without a word, he climbed into the boat just as the crack of a rifle and a distant whoop announced that Old Ben and Harry were at work. They were on the other side of the lake, directly opposite the point where our first deer hung. We paddled on, and passing between the mainland and a small island, the boy suddenly rested on his paddle.

"See here!" he said. "That's a patch of salt grass on that little island, and ef we don't git suthin' thar, I'm a Dutchman. Now don't waste a shot, an' mind, I'm going to shoot, too."

He headed the boat toward the island, barely twenty yards distant, and we saw two pair of gleaming eyes gazing at us from the low shores of the salt-patch. Ben dropped his paddle, took up his rifle, and we all fired together. Something dropped into the water with a loud splash and we heard a heavy body crashing through the underbrush toward the other side of the little island, which did not contain, in all, over an acre of ground. Ben seized his paddle and made the water fly as he rounded the island, just in time to see the branching antlers of a stag disappearing in the gloom as he swam stoutly away from the island. Murray to the contrary, we were debased enough to chase the stag, and before we reached it, the whole face of the sky was lighted up by vivid flashes of lightning and the rain fell in torrents. Dripping like river gods, we reached camp just as Old Ben and Harry, in a like situation, came up from the other side, showing the ears of four stags as the result of the night hunt.



Charlotte and Dick were standing under the great live-oak, with their hands clasped in each other's.

git safe to Yreka. Dey won't trouble dis hyar meet thee when thou reachest the land."

Quick then through the mind of the queen came a thought that oft when returning from the sea her noble hound would rush up to his breast into the swelling wave to greet his mistress' return.

Surely a human life was worth that of a brute, no matter how noble the beast might be. "I agree!" cried the woman, weakened almost to death by the stress of wind and wave.

A hoarse note of joy came from the throat of the bird; then again he fluttered his wings, quitted his perch, and, straight as the plummet's line, darted down beneath the wave at the stern of the galley.

The head of the merman who clung to the galley's keel beneath the wave the raven shattered with his claws of steel; a spell of doom might he whispered to the green sisters weaving their mystic webs in the dark caverns below, and the sea grew calm and the vessel righted. Then ascending again to the upper air, the raven flew thrice around the galley.

The wind stilled and the storm ceased.

"Behold!" cried the raven, as with outstretched wings he sailed on the bosom of the air, "my promise is kept; fail not you in thine."

Then straight up into cloudy sky the bird winged his way.

With a grateful heart the queen put the prow of the galley toward the land. No soul was in sight when the keel grated on the sand; but as the woman stopped once again upon her native soil, up from a hollow rock, where he had been crouching like a seal, started her son, little Sir John, and ran with his baby feet straight toward his mother.

And then through a rift in the leaden clouds above came the hoarse note of the raven, croaking in triumph.

But the queen, safe on land, determined to cheat the raven of his prey, so she hurried at once to the lonely cell of good Harrahd, the hermit of Torheim.

The monk was old and gray, spare in flesh, but strong in spirit. The stars he could read, and thus the future foretold by the aid of the mystic lamps above.

Many an Arabian sign he drew upon the sand at the midnight hour as he sought by subtle conjuration to learn the fate of the baby prince.

"That thou wilt give to me what first shall meet thee when thou reachest the land."

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A bevy of heroes are Boone, Kenton, and the Men of the Forest Fort, who are matched against the wily Mingo and the implacable Shawnee. The whole great future of these men seems to loom up before them as they enter upon their careers at Point Pleasant. Their innate bravery, sagacity, honesty and faithfulness to friends are fine features which this "over true tale" brings out with immense power and interest. As a record of Boone's First Trail, and Kenton's true Test of his qualities as ranger, THE WOLF DEMON will be valued by every lover of Wilderness and Indian stories.